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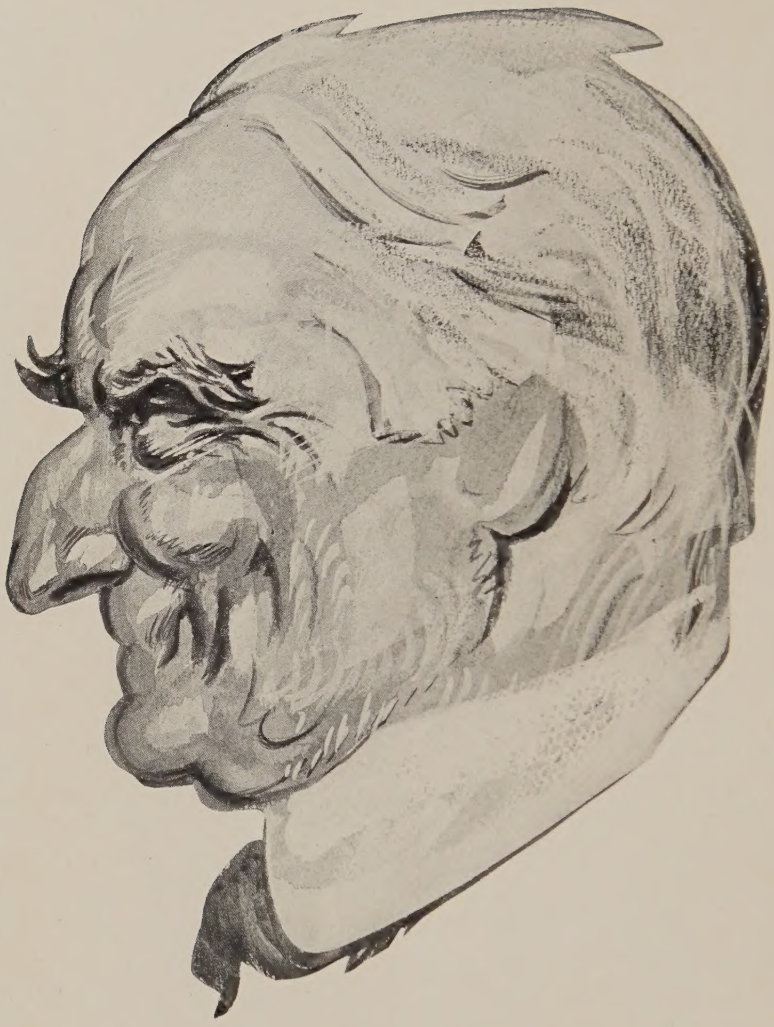
BEHIND THE MIRRORS



PRESIDENT WARREN GAMALIEL HARDING

BEHIND THE MIRRORS

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DISINTEGRATION AT WASHINGTON

By the Author of
"The Mirrors of Washington"

Le métier superieur de la critique, ce n'est pas même, comme le proclamait Pierre Bayle, de semer des doubtes; il faut aller plus loin, il faut détruire.

DE GOURMONT

WITH FIFTEEN CARTOONS BY CESARE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1922

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FOREWORD

"A BOOK like the *Mirrors of Downing Street* is well enough. It is the fashion to be interested in English notables. But that sort of thing won't do here. The American public gets in the newspapers all it wants about our national politicians. That isn't book material."

An editor said that just a year ago when we told him of the plan for the *Mirrors of Washington*. And, frankly, it seemed doubtful whether readers generally cared enough about our national political personalities to buy a book exclusively concerned with them.

But they did. The *Mirrors of Washington* became an instantaneous success. It commanded almost unprecedented attention. It was heartily damned and vociferously welcomed. By the averagely curious citizen, eager for insight behind the gilded curtains of press-agentry and partisanship, it was hailed as a shaft of common-sense sunlight thrown into a clay-footed wilderness of political pap. And close to one hundred thousand copies were absorbed by a public evidently genuinely interested in an uncensored analysis of the

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people who are running us, or ruining us, as individual viewpoint may determine.

The *Mirrors of Washington* was by way of being a pioneer, at least for America. Overseas, it is habitual enough to exhibit beneath the literary microscope the politically great and near-great, and even to dissect them—often enough without anæsthesia. To our mind, such critical examination is healthily desirable. Here in America, we are case-hardened to the newspapers, whose appraisal of political personages is, after all, pretty well confined to the periods of pre-election campaigning. And we are precious little influenced by this sort of thing; the pro papers are so pro, and the anti papers so anti, that few try to determine how much to believe and how much to dismiss as routine partisan prevarication.

But a book! Political criticism, and personality analyses, frozen into the so-permanently-appearing dignity of a printed volume—that is something else again! Even a politician who dismisses with a smile or a shrug recurrent discompliments in the news columns or the anonymous editorial pages of the press, is tempted to burst into angry protest when far less bitter, far more balanced criticism of himself is voiced in a book. A phenomenon, that, doubtless revisable as time goes on and the reflections of more book-bound Mirrors brighten the eyes of those who read and jangle the nerves of those who run—for office.

Behind the Mirrors is another such book. It delves into the fundamentals at Washington. It is concerned with political tendencies as well as political personalities. It presents what impresses us as a genuinely useful and brilliant picture of present-day governmental psychology and functioning. It is a cross section of things as they are.

The picture behind the mirrors is not as pretty as it might be. Probably the way to make it prettier is to let ample light in upon it so that the blemishes, discerned, may be rectified; and to impress those responsible for its rehabilitation with the necessity of taking advantage of the opportunities that are theirs.

When President Eliot of Harvard presented to a certain Senator an honorary degree, he described with inimitable charm and considerable detail that Senator's literary achievements; and then he mentioned his political activities, ending with substantially these words: "A man with great opportunities for public service still inviting him."

The invitation yet holds good. Acceptances are still in order.

G. P. P.

New York,
June, 1922.

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BEHIND THE MIRRORS

I

BEHIND THE MIRRORS

CHAPTER I

PRESIDENT HARDING AND THE CLOCK. GOD'S TIME AS IT WAS IN THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

PRESIDENT HARDING had recently to decide the momentous question whether we should have daylight saving in Washington. He decided it in a perfectly characteristic way, perfectly characteristic of himself and of our present political division and unsureness. He ruled that the city should go to work and quit work an hour earlier, but that it should not turn back the hands of the clock, should not lay an impious finger upon God's Time.

That this straddle is typical of our President needs no argument—he "has to be so careful," as he once pathetically said—but that it is symptomatic of the present American political consciousness perhaps needs elucidation.

The clock is one of the problems left to us by

the Great War, one of the innumerable problems thus left to us; it involves our whole attitude toward men and things.

It represents, rather literally, Mechanism. In the war we adopted perforce the creed that man was sufficiently master of his own destiny to adapt Mechanism to his own ends; he could lay a presumptuous hand upon God's Time. But in peace shall he go on thus boldly? Or shall he revert to the good old days, the days of McKinley, when the clock was sacred? Think of all the happiness, all the prosperity, that was ours, all the duty done and all the destiny abundantly realized, before man thought to lay a hand upon the clock!

The question what the limits to human government are is involved. What may man attempt for himself and what should he leave to the great Mechanism which has, upon the whole, run the world so well, to the Sun in its courses, to progress, to inevitability? After all the clock was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be—unless we meddle with it—and before its cheerful face America was built from a wilderness into a vast nation, creating wealth, so as to be the third historic wonder of the ages—the glory that was Greece, the grandeur that was Rome, the dollars that are America.

And not only are we divided as to the limits of government, but where shall Mr. Harding look for authority to guide him with respect to clocks?

To his party? This is a party government, you remember. But his party speaks with no clear voice about clocks or about anything else. To business? Business has only one rule—more clocks in government and less government in clocks. But business bows to the public. To public opinion then? The public is divided about clocks; we tend to grow class conscious about clocks. And clamorously amid all these authorities is heard the voice of the Farm Bloc exclaiming: "Don't touch God's Time."

So it is decided that Washington may save daylight and save the clock too, a double saving, a most happy compromise. If all questions touching Mechanism could only be solved in the direction of such splendid economies!

I listened a year ago to a most unusual Fourth of July oration. The speaker, like most of us in this period of break-up following the Great War, was rather bewildered. He had, moreover, his private reasons for feeling that life was not easily construed. An illness, perhaps mortal, afflicted him. Existence had been unclouded until this last cloud came; why was it to end suddenly and without reason? He had gone through the Great War a follower of Mr. Wilson's, to see the world scoffing at the passionate faith it had professed a few months before and sneering at the leaders it had then exalted. He had echoing in his mind the fine war phrases, "Brotherhood of Man," "War

to End War," "We must be just even to those to whom we do not wish to be just." Then some monstrous hand had turned the page and there was Harding, just as in his own life all success at the bar and in politics, and the joy of being lord of a vast country estate that had been patented in his family since colonial times, had suddenly come to an end; the page had turned.

So this is what he said, in a voice that rose not much above a whisper, "I have told them where to dig a hole and put me, out here on my pleasant place. I don't know what it means. I don't believe it has any meaning. The only thing to do is to laugh. You have trouble laughing? Look about you and you will find plenty to laugh at. Look at your President and laugh. Look at your Supreme Court and laugh. Not one of them knows whether he is coming or going. Everything for the moment has lost its meaning for everyone. If you can't laugh at anything else, just think how many angels there are who are blank blanks and how many blank blanks there are who are angels . . . and laugh."

The Comic Spirit looking down from some cool distance sees something like what this lawyer saw. It sees President Harding and the Ku Klux Klan. The connection between President Harding and the Ku Klux Klan? The Comic Spirit, perceiving everything, perceives that too. For it Mr. Harding is but the pious manifestation of a sentiment of

which the Ku Klux Klan is the unconscious and serviceable parody, that instinctive rush of a people with the world breaking up about it, to seek safety in the past. Men always shrink thus backward when facing an uncertain future, just as in moments of great peril they become children again, call "Mother!" and revert to early practices at her knee. It is one of the most intelligent things the human race ever does. It is looking before you leap: the race has no choice but to leap; it draws back to solid ground in the past for a better take-off into the future. Mr. Harding represents solid ground, McKinley and the blessed nineties, the days before men raised a presumptuous hand against the clock.

If utterly in earnest and determined to revive that happy period, you clothe yourself in that garment which evokes the assured past, the blessed nineties, the long white night shirt; the long white night shirt supplemented by the black mask and the tar brush shall surely save you.

The Comic Spirit looking about largely, like our Fourth of July orator, sees in Mr. Harding a wise shrinking into the safety of the past and in Mr. William H. Taft, our new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, at once a regard for the past and an eye for the future. Can anyone tell whether Mr. Justice Taft is coming or going, as this Fourth of July speaker asked? He comes and he goes, and like the wind man knows not whence he cometh or

whither he goeth. He is forward looking—when he is not backward looking. Like Zekle,

> "He stands a while on one foot fust,
> Then stands a while on t'other;
> And on which one he feels the wust,
> He can not tell you nuther.'

Glance at his public career. He stood upon his future foot with Roosevelt, the chosen executor of "My Policies." A little later he stands upon his past foot, alongside of Aldrich and Cannon, doing the works of perdition and bringing on the battle of Armageddon. Again you find him standing on his future foot beside Mr. Frank P. Walsh in the War Labor Board, ranging himself with Mr. Walsh in practically all the close decisions. Again you see him when all the fine forward looking of the war was over, scurrying from the Russian revolution as fast as President Wilson or all the rest of us. And once more on his future foot with Mr. Wilson for the League of Nations and on his past foot with President Harding against the League of Nations.

Let us be Freudian and say that the unconscious political self of the whole nation is responsible for the selection of Mr. Harding and Mr. Taft. As we shrink back into the past we are aware that it is for the take-off into the future, and so we have Mr. Taft. We both eat our cake and have it in the new Chief Justice.

The United States, like Zekle, is "standing a

while on one foot fust, then standing a while on t'other," moving forward or backward. But not for long, too large and secure to be permanently cautious, with too much well-being to be permanently bold, thinking, but with a certain restraining contempt for thought, instinctive rather than intellectual. Vast, eupeptic, assimilative, generous, adaptable, the Chief Justice typifies the American people in its more permanent characteristics.

Mr. Harding as President, Mr. Taft as Chief Justice, the agricultural bloc, the enfeebled Congress, the one million or so Democratic majority which becomes in four years a seven-million Republican majority, are only manifestations. The reality is the man, many millions strong, whose mental state produces the symptoms at Washington. It will be profitable to examine the content of his mind as it was in those days before momentous decisions had to be made about daylight saving, and as it is today when he hesitates between saving daylight and saving the clock, and perhaps decides to save both.

I can not better describe his political consciousness as it was than by saying that it contained three governments—the government of the clock, the government of the clock-winders, and the government of those who lived by the clock as religiously minded by the clock-winders. It was an orderly age, beautifully sure of itself, and the area of these

three governments was nicely delimited. There was only a small place for the third of these governments.

For the purposes of more common understanding I shall sometimes refer to the government of the clock as the government of Progress, and the government of the clock-winders as the government of business, and to the third government as the government at Washington.

Before the war the American was sure that with each tick of the clock the world grew richer and better, especially richer. Progress went inevitably on and on. It never turned backward or rested. Its mechanical process relieved man of many responsibilities. No one would think of touching the mechanism; turning back the hands of the clock might rob us of some boon that was intended in the beginning whose moment of arrival might be lost by interfering with God's Time.

Born on a continent which only a few years before was a wilderness but which now was the richest and one of the finest civilizations on the earth, the American could not fail to believe in progress. The visible evidences of it were on every hand. His father had been a poor immigrant seeking the mere chance to live; he was a farmer possessed of many acres, a business man who had an increasing income already in five figures, a rising young attorney, or physician. Even from generation to generation everything got better.

The past had had its unhappy moments. The American looked back at the past mainly to measure how far he had come and to guess how far moving forward at a geometrical ratio of increased speed he would go in the not distant future. History flattered him.

Before his eyes went on the steady conquest over Nature, or perhaps it is better to say, the steady surrender of Nature. Always there were new discoveries of science. Always there were new inventions. Forces which a little while ago were beyond control, whose existence even was unsuspected, were harnessed to everyday uses. He saw progress in statistics. Things which were reckoned in millions began to be reckoned in hundreds of millions, began to be reckoned in billions. We loved to read the long figures where, in the pleasing extension of ciphers, wealth grew, debts grew—even debts were a source of pride before they called for income taxes to meet the annual payments upon them.

Progress would never stop. Tomorrow we should set the sun's rays to some more practical use than making the earth green and pleasant to look at and its fruits good to eat. We should employ them like the waters of Niagara Falls, to turn the wheels of machinery by day and to light soap and automobile signs on Broadway by night. We should split atoms apart and release the mighty forces that had held them together since the be-

ginning, for the production of commodities in greater and greater quantities at less and less cost.

"We should," I say, but I do our inmost thought a vast injustice. Rather, Progress would, scientists and inventors being only the instruments of a Fate which went steadily forward to the accomplishment of its beneficent purposes. At the right moment, at the appointed hour, the man would appear. Progress kept the prompter's book and gave him the cue.

To a people with all these evidences of an irresistible forward movement in Nature before its eyes, came a prophet who gave it its law, the law of evolution, the law by which once the monocellular organism had acquired the mysterious gift of life out of combination and recombination inevitably came man. It was all the unfolding of the inevitable, the unrolling of time; the working out of a law.

Now, law has a quite extraordinary effect upon men's minds. The more Law there is the less Man there is. The more man spells Law with a capital letter the more he spells himself with a small letter. Man was no longer the special creation of God. God, instead of making Adam and Eve his wife, fashioned a grain of star dust and gave it a grain of star dust to wife, leaving the rest to Progress. Man who had been a little lower than the angels became, by an immense act of faith, a little higher than the earthworm. The old doctrine of the Fall

of Man took on a reverse twist. Man had not fallen but he had risen from such debased beginnings that he had not got far. He was in about the same place where he would have been if he had fallen.

It was easy to turn upside down our belief in the Fall of Man. We always knew there was something wrong with him, but we did not know what it was until evolution explained his unregenerate character so satisfactorily. Still the thought that Man did not move forward as fast as things, was less the special ward of Progress than automobiles, elevators and bathtubs, was vaguely disturbing.

The Greeks had left us records which showed that the human mind was as good three thousand years ago as it is today, or better. We shut our eyes to this bit of evidence by abandoning the study of the classics and excluding all allusion to them in the oratory of our Congress. And Mr. Wells in his History has since justified us by proving that the Greeks were after all only the common run of small-town folk—over-press-agented, perhaps, by some fellows in the Middle Ages who had got tired of the Church and who therefore pretended that there was something bigger and better in the world than it was.

So we pinned our hopes on the Martians and spent our time frantically signalling to the near-by planet, asking whether, when the earth grew as cold as King David when his physicians "pre-

scribed by way of poultice a young belle," and responded only weakly to the caress of the Sun, when its oceans dried up and only a trickle of water came down through its valleys from the melting ice at its poles, we should not, like the fancied inhabitants of the nearest celestial body, have evolved at last into super-beings. We wanted some evidence from our neighbors that, in spite of the Greeks, by merely watching the clock we should arrive at a higher estate.

The point I am trying to make is that we have been conducting the most interesting of Time's experiments in the government of men at a period when Man has been at a greater discount than usual in his own mind, when self-government faced too much competition from government by the clock.

When I speak of government by the clock, I should, perhaps, use capital letters to indicate that I have in mind that timepiece on which is recorded God's Time; whose ticking is the forward march of progress. Clocks as they touch our lives require human intervention. The winders of these clocks perform something that may be described as an office.

You recall the place the clock filled in our households a generation ago. Father wound it once a week, at a stated time, as regularly as he went to church. The winding of it was a function. No other hand but father's touched the key; if one

had, the whole institution of family life would have been imperiled. Father is a symbol for the government of the clock-winders, those sacred persons who translated Progress into terms of common utility.

When we descended from the regions of theocratic power to those of human institutions, we found ourselves in America to be workers in one vast countrywide workshop. The workshop touches us more directly and more importantly than does the nation. Out of the workshop comes our bread and butter. When the workshop closes down we suffer and form on line at the soup kitchens.

Three meals a day concern us more than do post-offices and federal buildings, of however white marble or however noble façades. What we have to eat and to wear, what we may put in the bank, what real freedom we enjoy, our position in the eyes of men, our happiness and unhappiness, depend on our relations to the national workshop, not on our relations to the national government.

We conceived of it vaguely as a thing which produced prosperity, not prosperity in its larger and more permanent aspects—that was ours through the beneficence of Progress and the immortal luck of our country—but prosperity in its more immediate details.

A lot of confused thinking in which survived political ideas as old as the race, converted into modern forms, entered into our conception of it.

It was a thing of gods and demigods, with legends of golden fleeces and of Hercules holding up the skies. It was feudal in its privileges and immunities. It enjoyed the divine right of kings. Yet it operated under laws not made by man.

When it failed to effect prosperity, it was because of a certain law that at the end of ever so many years of fatness it must produce a famine. At such times men, demigods, stepped out of banks with sacks of gold on their shoulders and mitigated the rigors of its failure.

And these splendid personages might set going again that which law stopped. We bowed patiently and unquestioningly to its periodic eccentricity as part of the Fate that fell upon the original sinner, and watched hopefully the powerful men who might in their pleasure or their wisdom end our sufferings.

We were taught to regard it as a thing distinct from political authority, so that the less governors and lawmakers interfered with it the better for the general welfare. Back in our past is a thorough contempt for human intelligence which relates somehow to the religious precept against questioning the wisdom of God. Whatever ordinary men did in the field of economics was sure to be wrong and to check the flow of goods upon which the well-being of society depended. We were all, except the familiars of the great forces, impotent pieces of the game economic law played upon this checkerboard of nights and days.

I have said that this government of the national workshop in which we were all laborers or foremen or superintendents or masters sometimes seemed to our consciousness a government of laws and sometimes a government of men. In any primitive faith priests played a large part, and probably the primitive worshippers before them much of the time did not think beyond the priests, while sometimes they did—when it was convenient for the priests that they should.

When famines or plagues came it was because the gods were angry. When they are averted it is the priests who have averted them. When economic panics came it was because we had sinned against economic law; when they were averted it was because men had averted them, men who lived on intimate terms with economic law and understood its mysterious ways, and enjoyed its favor, as their great possessions testified.

Naturally, we are immensely more directly and more constantly concerned with this government than with the government at Washington. Besides, we were mostly business men, or hoped to be. It was our government more truly than was the government at Washington.

Only a limited area in the political consciousness was left for self-government. You descended from the heights to the broad flat plain of man's contempt for man. It was there, rooted firmly in the constitution, that the government at Washington

reared its head. Self-government is a new thing; no myth has gathered about it. It was established among men who believed in the doctrine of the original sin, and it had been carried by their successors, who had abandoned the sinner Adam as the progenitor of their kind for the sinless but inglorious earthworm. The inferiority complex which is the race's most persistent heritage from the past was written all over it.

I suppose it was Adam Smith who made self-government possible by discovering that the things really essential to our welfare would take care of themselves if we only let them alone and that the more we let them alone the better they would take care of themselves, under eternal and immutable laws. Ah, the happy thought occurred, if the really essential things are thus beneficially regulated why shouldn't we have the fun of managing the non-essentials ourselves?

Progress ruled the world kindly and well. It might be trusted to see that all went for the best. The government of business functioned effectively for the general weal. The future was in the hands of a force that made the world richer and better. The present, in all that concerned man most vitally with regards food and shelter, was directed by enlightened self-interest represented by men who personified success.

It was impossible not to be optimistic when existence was so well ordered. There was no sorry

scheme of things to be seized entire. Life was a sort of tropics without tropical discomforts. The tropics do not produce men. They produce things.

The Mechanism worked, as it seemed to us, in those happy days. We were satisfied with the clock and the clock-winders. We were not divided in our minds as to whether we should turn back its hands. The less men meddled the better. There was little work for human government to do. There was no call for men.

The picture in our heads, to use Mr. Graham Wallas's phrase, was of a world well ruled by a will from the beginning, whose purpose was increase; of some superior men having semi-sacred relations with the will who acted as intermediaries between the will and the rest of us; and of the rest of us as being rewarded by the will, through its intermediaries, according to our timidity and submissiveness.

It was, the world, over the great age of the racial inferiority complex, for which Science had furnished a new and convincing basis. I might maintain that the Great War was modern society's effort to compensate for the evolution complex; man wanted to show what he could do, in spite of his slimy origin. Anyway, it broke the picture in our heads. Being economical, like Mr. Harding, we are trying both to save the pieces of the picture and put them together again, and to form, out of

them unfortunately, a new picture; which accounts for our confusion.

But the picture in our heads before the war, such as it was, is the reason for our present inadequacy. You could not form much of a self-government or develop men for one, with that complex in your soul.

CHAPTER II

GOD'S TIME AS IT IS; AN INGERSOLL THAT REQUIRES MUCH WINDING

How many of us believe in Progress with the unquestioning faith we had before that day in July, 1914, when Austria's declaration of war upon Serbia started the ruin of all that centuries had built up in Europe? Most of us have not stopped to analyze what has happened since to our belief that the world ever moved by an irresistible primal impulse forward to more and better things, that the song which the morning stars sang together was "It shall be multiplied unto you," that increment is inevitable and blessed. But how many of us really believe that in the unqualified way we once did?

The world had many pleasant illusions about Progress before the great catastrophe of 1914 came to shatter them. And nowhere were these illusions more cheerfully accepted than in this country of ours, where a wilderness had become a great civilization in the space of a century and where the

evidences of rapid, continuous advancement were naturally strong.

The first pleasant illusion was that modern progress had made war impossible, at least war between the great nations of the earth, which, profiting by the examples we had set them, enjoyed more or less free governments, where production mounted from year to year, where wealth was ever increasing. Destiny plainly meant more and more iron dug from the ground and turned into steel machinery, larger, more powerful automobiles, taller and taller buildings, swifter and swifter elevators, more and more capacious freight cars, and destiny would not tolerate stopping all this for the insanity of destruction.

Moreover—how good were the ways of Progress—the ever increasing mastery over the forces of nature which had been fate's latest and best gift to humanity, approaching a sort of millennium of machinery, while creating vaster engines of industry had brought into being more and monstous weapons of warfare.

Life with benignant irony was making man peaceful in spite of himself. His bigger and bigger cannon, his more and more lethal explosives were destroying his capacity for destruction. War was being hoist by its own petard. The bigger the armies, the more annihilating the shells piled up in the arsenals, the less the chance of their ever being used.

Progress, infinitely good toward man, had found a way out of war, the plague that had blighted the earth since the beginning. What religion could not do, the steel foundries and the chemical laboratories had done. They had made war too deadly to be endured. In effect they had abolished it. Peace was a by-product of the Bessemer oven and the dye vat. Man's conquest of himself was an unconsidered incident of his conquest of nature.

Then there were the costs of war. Progress had done something more than make fighting intolerably destructive of men and cities; it had made it intolerably destructive of money. Even if we would go to war, we could not since no nation could face the vast expenditures.

Two little wars of brief duration, the Boer War and the Balkan War, had left great debts to be paid and had brought in their train financial disturbances affecting the entire world. A European war would destroy immensely more capital and involve vastly greater burdens. No nation with such a load on its shoulders could meet the competition of its peace keeping rivals for the world's trade. No government in its senses would provoke such consequences, and governments were, of course, always in their senses.

You did not have to accept this as an act of faith; you could prove it. Shells, thanks to Progress, cost so many hundreds of dollars each.

Cannon to fire them cost so many thousands of dollars each and could only be used a very few times. Armies such as the nations of Europe trained, cost so much a day to feed and to move. The demonstration was perfect. Progress had rendered war virtually impossible.

If in spite of all a war between great modern nations did start, it could last only a few weeks. No people could stand the strain. Bankruptcy lay at the end of a short campaign. A month would disclose the folly of it, and bring the contestants to their senses; if it did not, exhaustion would. Credit would quickly disappear. Nations could not borrow on the scale necessary to prolong the struggle.

The wisest said all these things as governments began to issue orders of mobilization in 1914. Emperors were merely shaking their shining armor at each other. There would be no war. It was impossible. The world had progressed too far. Anachronistic monarchies might not know it, but it had. Their armies belonged as much to the past as their little titles, as all the middle-age humbug of royalty, their high-wheeled coaches, their outriders in their bright uniform, their debilitating habit of marrying cousins, their absurdities about their own divine rights. They had armies, as they wore upturned mustachios, to make themselves look imposing. They were as unreal as the pictured kings in children's story books or on a deck of

cards. Forces mightier than they had settled forever the question of war.

And when hostilities actually began an incredulous America knew they would be over in three months. Anybody with a piece of paper and a pencil could prove that they could not last. It took all of Kitchener's prestige to persuade society that the fighting would keep on through the winter, and his prediction that it would continue three years was received as the error of a reporter or the opinion of a professional soldier who overlooked the economic impossibility of a long war.

It is worth while recalling these cheerful illusions to estimate what has happened to the idea of Progress in seven swiftly changing years. We did not give up readily the illusion that the world had been vastly and permanently changed for the better. As it was proved that there could be a war and a long one and as the evidence multiplied that this war was the most devastating in all history, we merely changed our idea of Progress, which became in our minds a force that sometimes produced evil in order that good might result.

The Great War itself was assimilated to our idea of a beneficent fate. Whom Progress loveth it chasteneth. Instead of rendering war impossible by making it destructive and costly, it visited the earth with the greatest war of all time in order to make war impossible. This was the war to end all

war. The ways of progress were past finding out but they were good.

Paper demonstrations had gone wrong. Governments did not go bankrupt after a few months but could still borrow at the end of five years. Humanity did not sicken and turn away from the destruction, but the greater the carnage the more eager were the nations still at peace to have a hand in it. Still it could never happen again. It was a lesson sent of fate. Men must co-operate with progress and not leave to that force the sole responsibility for a permanently peaceful future. They had sinned against the light in allowing such unprogressive things, as autocracies upon the earth. They must remove the abominations of the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns. Once they had set up that brightest flower of Progress, modern democracy, in place of the ancient empires, there would be no more wars. Democracy had one great merit. It was rather stupid and lacking in foresight. It did not prepare for war and being forever unready would not fight.

The war had been sent by Progress to call man's attention to their duties regarding certain anachronisms with which Progress was otherwise unable to deal.

You will observe that the idea of Progress took three forms in as many years. First it was a pure force moving straight ahead toward a goal of unimaginable splendor, even whose questionable

UNCLE SAM'S CONFERENCE

products like bigger cannon and higher explosives accomplished by one of its larger ironies benefits that were the opposite of their purposes.

Then assuming the aspects of a more personal deity, it became capable of intentions and could choose courses utterly inconsistent with itself in order to achieve ends that would be splendidly consistent with itself. It made larger demands upon faith.

Then it began to require a little aid from man himself, on the principle that God helps them that help themselves, the cleaning up by men of the human rubbish heap, the purging of autocracy by democracy. Human responsibility began to emerge. The picture in our heads was changing.

Then, as the war came to a close it became apparent that President Wilson's happy idea that democracies, being stupid and unready to fight, would live together in eternal peace, was inadequate. The treaty would leave the three great democracies armed as the autocracies never had been armed. They might elect to remain so and use their weapons as provocatively as any Hapsburg or Hohenzollern ever did. Men must organize, must league themselves together, must govern themselves internationally in order to have peace, which was no longer an accidental by-product of the modern factory, but must be created by men themselves, deliberately acting to that end. Men must work out their own salvation, aided and ad-

monished of course by such perfect works of progress as a war to end war.

Men make the attempt. The peoples of the earth assemble and write a treaty which keeps the chief democratic nations on the continent of Europe armed against each other, which provides endless subjects of dispute among the smaller countries; and they sign a covenant which the unanimous opinion of mankind rejects as an effective safeguard against future wars and which many regard as dividing the earth into two hostile camps. "It was humanity's failure," declares General Smuts. "There will always be war," asserts President Harding, calling a conference not to end war but to lessen the cost of preparing for war.

Not only has material progress failed to produce peace as its by-product, but moral progress has failed to produce peace as its deliberate product.

And Progress is in reality moving forward to wars more deadly and more ruinous than the last. Weapons were developed toward the end of the Great War capable of vastly worse havoc than any used during its course. And only a beginning has been made. If we may come to use the power that holds atoms together in the driving of engines, we may also use it in war to blast whole cities from the face of the earth. Conquest of the air means larger bombs from the air. Greater knowledge of chemistry means industrial advancement and also deadlier

poison gases. Material gains bring compensating material ills or the possibility of them.

Even the material gains, great as they have been, seem somewhat smaller today than they once were thought to be. In our most optimistic moments before the war we had the pleasant illusion of steadily decreasing hours of labor and steadily lowering costs. Men had worked twelve, ten, and finally eight hours a day, and it was predicted that this process would go on until six, perhaps four hours a day would be sufficient to supply the needs of the race.

We paid five cent fares on the street cars and were hopeful that they would become three cent fares; three cents was established by law in many cities as the maximum charge. The railroads collected a little over two cents a mile for carrying passengers and in many states statutes were enacted establishing two cents a mile as the legal rate. We were impressed by striking examples of lowering prices, in the automobile industry for example, and were confident that this was the rule of modern life.

Prices, except of food products, were steadily decreasing; there might be an end to this movement but we were nowhere near the end. The wonders of modern inventions, and if not these, the economics of concentrated organization, and if not these, the use of by-products, were steadily lowering costs. The standard of living was rising.

What was the rich man's luxury in one generation was the poor man's necessity in the next. It would always be so. That was Progress.

We now pay seven or eight cents to ride on street cars and more than three cents a mile to travel on trains. All prices have advanced. The standard of living has declined and we ask ourselves if it will not have to decline still further. No one now talks of a six-hour day. We recognize a check in the process toward increasing well-being at less effort. Life has become more difficult. Progress is no longer a simple and steady movement onward in a single direction. Like evolution sometimes it seems to stand still or perhaps go back. Like evolution it requires a *vital élan;* it is a thing of leaps and rests. We are less enthusiastic about it when it rests.

We blame our discomfiture, the higher prices and the lower standard of living on the war, but much of it was inevitable, war or no war. The idea that the struggle for existence would grow steadily easier was largely a conclusion from appearances. We were raising our standard of living by skimming the cream of our natural resources. When our original forests were cut, when the most easily mined veins of iron and coal were exhausted, when oil wells ceased to gush and had to be pumped, unless substitutes were found, all the basic costs of production would advance. Ultimately they would advance to the point where economies of organi-

zation, of quantity production, of by-product development, so far as they have been realized, would no longer serve to keep down final prices. We were rapidly reaching that point when the war came.

We lived under an illusion. What we called the results of progress was the rapid exhaustion of easily available resources. We used our capital and thought ourselves rich. And we lie under a burden of debt made much heavier by the weapons which progress put into our hands. Progress had not made war too expensive to fight but it had made peace too expensive to be borne. We forgot the law of diminishing returns. We ignored the lessons of history that all ages come to an end, when the struggle for existence once more grows severe until new instruments are found equal to the further conquest over nature. Useful inventions have not kept pace with increasing consumption and rapidly disappearing virgin resources. The process of steadily lowering costs of production has stopped and reverse process has set in. Spectacular inventions like the airplane have deluded us into the belief that Progress, always blessing us, we had the world by the tail. But coal and iron became harder and costlier to mine. Oil neared exhaustion. Timber grew scarcer. Agricultural lands smaller in proportion to population.

Immense possibilities lie before us. So they did before the man with the stone hatchet in his hand,

but he waited long for the steam, saw and drill and crusher. An invention which would mean as much in the conquest of nature as did the steam engine would make the war debt as easily borne as the week's account at the grocery store. But when will progress vouchsafe it? Converting coal into power we waste 85 per cent of its energy in coal and call that efficient. But does Progress always respond instantly to our needs with new methods and devices, like a nurse responding to a hungry child? A few years ago we were sure it did, but now we look anxiously at the skies for a sign.

We had another characteristic pleasant illusion during the war. Progress, like the Lord, in all previous conflicts was on our side. Here was a great need of humanity. Surely, according to rule, it should be met by some great invention that would blast the Germans out of their places in the earth and give the sons of light an easy and certain victory. All the familiars of the deity sat about in boards watching for the indication that the engine to meet the needs of civilization had been granted. But it never was.

I do not write this to suggest that men, especially American men, have ceased to believe in progress. They would be fools if they had. I write to suggest that they have ceased to believe in Progress. They would be fools if they had not. A great illusion is gone, one of the chief dislocations wrought by the war.

What the war has done to our way of thinking has been to lay a new stress upon man as a free and responsible agent. After all the battles were won not by guns, or tanks or gas or airplanes, but as always by the common man offering his breast to the shots of the enemy. The hope of the future is all in human organizations, in societies of nations, in councils and conferences. Men's minds turn once more to governments with renewed expectation. Not only do we think for the first time seriously of a government of the world but we focus more attention on the government at Washington. Groups with special interests to serve reach out openly to control it.

The war laid a new emphasis on government. Not only did the government have our persons and our lives at its command but it assumed authority over our food, it directed our factories and our railroads, it told us what we could manufacture and ship, it decided who could borrow of the general credit and for what purposes, it fixed the prices at which we could buy and sell. It came to occupy a new place in the national consciousness and one which it will never wholly lose. One rival to it,—the belief, having its roots in early religious ideas, and strengthened by scientific theory and the outward results of the great inventions, that moved by some irresistible impulse, life went steadily forward to higher and higher planes, and that man had but little to do but pluck the

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fruits of progress—has been badly shattered by events.

But men do not change beliefs suddenly. Perhaps after all the war was only the way of progress —to usher in a new and brilliant day. Perhaps the unfolding future has something near in store far greater and better than went before. We shall not trust men too far, men with their obstinate blindness, men with their originally sinful habit of thinking they know better than the forces which rule the world. We want not leaders but weather cocks, who will veer to the kindlier wind that may blow when it is yet only a zephyr.

We turn to men yet, we cling a little to the hope that fate will yet save us. This division in us accounts for Lloyd George and Harding, our own commonplace "best we have on hand" substitute for the infinitely variable Englishman, adjusted to every breath that blows, who having no set purpose of his own offers no serious obstacle to any generous design of fate.

Senator Borah once said to me, "The Administration has no definite policies." And it is not Mr. Harding's fault. If he wanted to form any the people wouldn't let him. They elected him not to have any. They desired in the White House some one who would not look further ahead than the next day until the future became clearer. If he had purposes events might prove them to be wrong.

The same fundamental idea underlay the remark of a member of the Cabinet, at the outset of the recent disarmament and Far Eastern Conference, that "Lloyd George was the hope of the gathering because he had no principles."

The war destroyed many men but it half restored Man. You see how inevitable optimism is. The ways of Progress are indeed past finding out. Governments during it performed the impossible. They even took in hand the vast industrial mechanism which we ordinarily leave to the control of the "forces." We half suspect they might do the impossible in peace but we half hope that some kindlier fate is in store for us than to trust ourselves to human intelligence. We don't know whether to put our money on Man or on Progress; so we put it on Mr. Harding.

CHAPTER III

GOLDEN WORDS TURN TO BRASS

UNLIKE government by Progress, government by business, by the semi-sacred intermediaries between the will to increase and the rest of us, began to disintegrate before the war; which merely completed the process.

Let us consider what has happened in the last few years to government by business, that government which the smoking compartment philosopher has in mind when he says so hopefully of Mr. Harding: "*They* will see to it that he gets along all right."

The first manifestation of nationality in this country was the nationality of business. Before industry became national nothing was national. The United States was a pleasant congeries of localities. It was held together by reading everywhere the story of the Battle of Bunker Hill in the same school history, which sometimes bore a different author's name but which was always the same history. "Don't fire till you can see the whites of their eyes" and "If we don't hang together we

shall all hang separately" were the unifying bond, and they were enough. We had the same sense of identity as an infant has when it becomes aware that the delightful toe and the delightful mouth where it is inserted appertain vaguely to the one ego. The local factory and the local bank subtended the entire arc of economic consciousness. There was one single-track railroad which ran from Podunk to Peopack and another from Peopack to Peoria, unrelated, discontinuous.

In those simple times when business was local the local factory owner, banker, or railroad builder was the hero of his neighborhood. It was he who "put the town on the map." He gave it prosperity. He built it by attracting labor into his employment. He gave it contact with the outside world. If you owned town lots it was he who gave them value and it was he who might take away their value if he was offended. If you had a general store it was he who added to its patronage by adding to the population. If you raised farm products nearby it was he who improved your market. He built the fine house which it was your pride to show visitors. Your success and happiness was bound up in his. He conferred his blessings for a consideration, for you were careful to make no laws which restricted the freedom of his operations. You permitted him a vast unofficial "say" in your local government; you gave him a little the best of it in the assessment for taxes. You felt a little lifted up

by his condescension in calling you by your first name and stopping to ask about your family on the street corner. You were jealous of his rights because after all the value of your own depended upon his use of his.

When business figures arose upon the national horizon they were merely these local figures vastly multiplied. As a people we called them "Jim" and "Jay," and "Dan'l," just as we had called the local manufacturer and banker by their first names. All the good will that went to the local business leaders went to them. They put money into our pockets, when they didn't happen to take it out of our pockets; on the whole they were doing the great work of making this country a richer and better land. Some who did not conceive the resources of the printing press in the issuance of new securities had to suffer, but that was their lookout; suffering for some was the way of the world.

Business began to be national in the tying together into systems the little dislocated railroads that local enterprise had laid down and in the creation of a national securities market for the distribution of ownership in the new combinations.

A new era opened when Gould and Fisk and Drew started at full speed their rival printing presses in Wall Street. Look over our whole drab political story from the death of Lincoln to the arrival of Roosevelt, more than a generation, and, if we did not preserve the names of our Presidents

in our histories, how many names are there worth remembering? Garfield was shot, which was dramatic. Cleveland was a fat man who used long Latin words. He was also the first Democratic chief executive in more than thirty years. What else? Who else?

Meanwhile an amazing array of business personages diverted attention from the inconspicuous Hayeses, Arthurs, and McKinleys, who were the flower of our public life. Gould, Fisk, Drew, Hill, Carnegie, the Rockefellers, Harriman, Morgan, Ryan—business was fertile of men, politics sterile; you have to go back to the foundation of the government for a period so prolific in men, of the other sort, or to the age of Elizabeth or of Pericles for another as prolific in men, of still another kind. How could the dull sideshow in Washington compete with the big spectacle in New York?

These demigods of business were not only shining personalities; they were doing the work of making America great and rich; we all shared in the prosperity they were creating. To go back to the small town again, who was it increased the opportunities of the storekeeper, the neighboring farmer, or real estate holder? Was it the mayor and the common council by passing ordinances about street signs and sidewalk encumbrances? Or the manufacturer or railroad builder who put the town on the map, giving employment to labor or an outlet for its products?

The government at Washington occupied a place in our consciousness similar to that of the government of the small town. It was charged with our national defense, a function of such little importance that we had hardly an army or a navy. It conducted our economic defense, against the foreigner, with laws written, however, by business itself, which naturally knew best how it wanted to be defended; you could not, in your proper senses, suppose that the Hayeses, Arthurs, and McKinleys were wiser than the Carnegies, Hills, Morgans, or Harrimans. For the rest it was told severely to let well enough alone. To make assurance doubly sure that it would do so it was rather openly given over to the great men who were creating the national wealth.

Starting with the combination of the little speculatively built railroads into systems and the development of a security market to float the shares of stock in the new companies, business took on rapidly a more and more national character. Great bankers arose to finance the consolidations. An investing public with a wider horizon than that which used to put its money in local enterprises entrusted its funds in the hands of the great bankers or took its chances in the market for stocks. Industry went through a similar concentration. Stronger companies absorbed their weaker and less successful rivals. The same bankers who sat in the boards of directors of the railroads represent-

ing their investing public took their places in the directorate of manufacturing combinations.

The railroads seeking the business of the big industrial companies and the big industrial companies desiring favors from the railroads placed representatives in each others' boards. This interlocking created a national organization of business dominated by a few striking and spectacular figures.

The popular imagination was as much heated over the discovery of the United States as a single field of enterprise as the imagination of Europe had been centuries earlier over the discovery of the new world.

The psychology of the local industry period carried over into this new period of national industry. The whole country became one vast small town. The masters of industry, banking, and the railroads were the leading citizens. They were "putting the United States on the map," as the local creator of wealth had put the small town on the map. They were doing something vast, from which we all undoubtedly benefited. Perhaps we could not trace our advantage so immediately as we could to the enterprise of the man who brought population to our town, swelling the price of our real estate or increasing the sales at our stores. But what had been a matter of experience on a small scale was a matter of belief on a large scale. The same consequences must follow, with manifold abundance.

And the nation was demonstrably growing rapidly, immensely richer; surely cause and effect.

Business had from the first taken on among us, as Mr. Lowes Dickinson remarks, a religious character; and when by a great thrust it overreached the bounds of locality and became national, its major prophets emerged. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks quotes Mark Twain as writing: "The words of a proprietor of a rich coal mine have a golden sound, and his common sayings are as if they were solid wisdom." How much more of this sacred character inhered in the heroes who created nationwide railroad systems, vast steelmaking consolidations, monopolies of oil and coal!

When a New York lawyer said of E. H. Harriman that he moved in spheres which no one else dare tread, he was putting, a little late, into words the national awe of the men who had overleapt the bounds of locality and bestrode the continent industrially, the heads of the vast business hierarchy. When Mr. Baer said that he operated the Reading Railroad by divine right he said only what a worshipping people had taught him to think. Those men did not use this half-religious language by accident; they crystallized into phrases the feeling of the country toward those who had done God's work of making it rich, making it successful.

Each like an unconscious Cervantes helped to laugh our industrial chivalry away.

How easy it is to believe about yourself what

everyone believes about you! How hard not to! How easy to believe that you rule railroads by "divine right," or walk in "higher spheres," when the whole unexpressed consciousness of a hundred million people assigns you just such hieratic appurtenances and privileges. How doubt in the face of all this evidence? They identified themselves with Progress, and Progress was what ruled the world. If you have faith and if you are fortified with the faith of others, self-identification with one of the larger forces is not difficult. Was not what they were doing Progress, was it not the realization of that benignant will to the utter blossoming of chaos into utility which was planned in the beginning? Were they not instruments rather than mere men, instruments of the greater purpose of which America was the perfect work? If you believe in theocratic forces you believe also in chosen human agencies for carrying them out.

They were more than instruments of Progress. I have spoken of government by economic law as having challenged political government in the consciousness of the people. As a country we perhaps believe in economic law more firmly than any nation in the world. Wasn't America being produced in accordance with economic law and wasn't America one of the marvels of the earth? I asked a salesman recently, a man with no personal interests which would give him the prejudices of the business world, why he hated Henry Ford.

"Because," he replied instantly and without hesitation, "he defies economic law." He spoke like a true American. To defy economic law and make money at it is like selling the Savior for twenty pieces of silver.

"The physical laws," says De Gourmont, "promulgated or established by the scientists, are confessions of ignorance. When they cannot explain a mechanism they declare its movements are due to a law. Bodies fall by virtue of the law of gravitation. This has precisely the same value in the serious order as the comic *virtus dormitiva*." In the promulgation of economic law our interest perverts the simple and just operation of our ignorance. In the field of physical phenomena we perceive a series of uniform events and call that uniformity a law. In the field of economic phenomena we perceive a series of events uniformly serving our interests and call that uniformity a law.

These greater business men of the past fruitful generation operated on the whole over a long period of falling prices. Wealth accumulated. You read about it in the government reports, dividing the total by the total population. The division thus effected was mighty assuring. Labor was better paid. Higher institutions of learning multiplied. Libraries housed in marble grew upon every crossroads. Intellectual as well as material needs were in process of being better satisfied. We were approaching an age when ink upon white paper, now

REPRESENTATIVE FRANK W. MONDELL OF WYOMING

so cheap, cheaper than ever in the pitiful past, should lift humanity to a new and higher level.

The evidence was conclusive. These greater business men were in supreme, in conspicuous direction of the country's development. The happiest results followed. They worked in harmony with economic law, for they prospered gloriously and one could no more break economic law and prosper than one could break criminal law and keep out of jail. Until Ford came no one could defy economic law with impunity.

And law and justice being two ideas that associate themselves together in the human mind, in a binder of optimism perhaps, like the disparate elements that form clinkers in a furnace, they were accomplishing that perfect work of the justice which inhered in things at the beginning, when tiny atoms with the urge to produce an earth fit for man to live on, to produce America in short, began to discover affinities for each other. No wonder they penetrated "higher spheres" ruled by "divine right," and that "golden words" dropped from their mouths. Progress, destiny, an instinct for economic law, it was much to unite one man.

Again, they were more than this. Men cannot be so universally looked to for the welfare of the nation as they were, without becoming in effect the government of that nation. Business and the government were one. Public opinion at that time would have regarded an administration which de-

fied the great commercial interests as dangerous to the country's advancement. Lawyers like Mr. Knox or Mr. Root, who had proved their value to them, went to the Senate as their spokesmen. Able and ambitious men in both Houses of Congress, wishing power and influence, became their agents. The chairmen of the important committees of both houses were in their confidence and spoke with authority because of what they represented. Some of the virtue of the great, some shadow of divine right, descended upon them. Among valets the valet of the king is king.

We forget, in the great outcry that was raised a few years ago over the "invisible government," that the invisible government was once sufficiently visible, almost consciously recognized, and fully accepted. It seemed the most natural thing in the world that the men who were making the country rich, making it a nation economically, should work their will freely at Washington. We jealously guarded their liberties. Woe unto the legislator who would interfere with their freedom to contract, for example, for the labor of children, which we described as the freedom of children to sell their labor advantageously. Adult labor banding together to arrange terms of its own sale was felt to be a public enemy. Every age has its fetish; the medicine man who could exorcise the evil spirit in stone and bush was not a more privileged character than his successor at whose touch prosperity sprang

out of the earth, at whose word the mysterious economic forces which might in their wrath prove so destructive, bowed and became kind.

Make a few individuals the embodiment of a national purpose that has long existed, unconscious and unquestioned, give them as you inevitably do in such a case the utmost freedom that is possible on this earth, let them be limited enough mentally so that they are blind to any other possible purpose; do all these things and you produce great men. It was an age of great men, Rockefellers, Carnegies, Morgans, Hills, Ryans, Harrimans, and a host of others, richer in personalities than any other period of American life except that which produced Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, Jefferson, and Marshall. They were the flowering of the whole pioneer civilization.

One hundred and fifty years of freedom has produced few free men. Perhaps these were all. They may not have been free intellectually. Charles Francis Adams writes of their kind: "I have known, and known tolerably well, a good many successful men,—'big' financially, men famous during the last half century; and a less interesting crowd I do not care to encounter. Not one that I have ever known would I care to meet again, nor is one of them associated in my mind with the idea of humor, thought, or refinement."

Never mind. They were free in all the essential ways. The men of whom Adams wrote had no

such sense of their limitations as he expressed. Only an Adams would then have had it, and the Adamses were not what M. Galtier of *Le Temps* suggested when, hastily absorbing the American spirit at Washington, he said to me: "I am reading *The Education of Henry Adams:* He was what you would call a typical American, was he not?"

An Adams, even Charles Francis Adams, writing of that time, was untypical enough, to have missed the point, which was not whether these men "'big' financially" were interesting, witty, thoughtful, or refined, but whether they were free. And they were; they were so sure of themselves, and public opinion was so sure of them, that they concentrated on the one great aim of that simple day, and did not waste themselves upon non-essentials like "humor, thought, or refinement."

I have a theory that we are wrong in ascribing the poverty of American literature and statesmanship to the richness of our business life. "All our best and ablest minds went into commerce," we say. We flatter ourselves. Mr. Carnegie, born in the days of Elizabeth, might not have been Shakespeare. Mr. Harriman was perhaps, after all, no mute Milton, Mr. Morgan no Michaelangelo.

These brave spirits developed in business not so much perhaps because of the national urge to "conquer a continent" as because in business, enjoying the immunity it then did, they found the utmost opportunity for self-expression, the one

great measure of freedom which this free country afforded. A jealous public guarded their divine right from impious hands. They believed in themselves. The people believed in them. So the flowering of the pioneer age came, in such a race of men as are not on the earth today, and the rule of business reached its climax.

It was an autumn flowering, rich and golden like the Indian summer of New England culture, a sign that a cycle was run. Adams sniffing from the transcendental heights of Boston wrote: "a race of mere money-getters and traders." Remember the sneers in our cocksure press of those days at the "culture" of Boston? Boston has had its revenge. The words "mere money-getters" bit in. There were other objects in life beside pioneering the industrial opportunities of a whole continent just brought together into commercial unity. Mr. Morgan began to buy art. Mr. Carnegie began to buy libraries and started authorship himself. The men "'big' financially" began to look over their shoulders and see the shadows—as we all do now—where they a little before kept their eyes straight forward and saw the one clear vision, the truth, such as it was, that made them free.

I have traced that element in the American political consciousness, government by business, to its highest moment.

"Divine right" is only safe when it is implicit. When you begin to avow it, as Mr. Baer did, it is

already in question. The national passion for equality began to work. Had not Mr. Carnegie confessed the weakness in his soul's fortress by writing a book? Had not Mr. Morgan by buying art suggested the one aim of pioneering on a grand scale might not be life's sole end?

Mr. Baer with his avowal, Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Morgan with their seeking of the broader satisfactions, Mr. Schwab behaving like a king in exile at the gaming tables of Monte Carlo, may have invited what followed. But they were only expressing in their own way the sense becoming general that pioneering was over and that its ideals were too narrow and too few—even if no clear sense was coming of what state and what ideals were to take their place. Men turn from leaders whose day of greatest usefulness is past and set up new leaders against them. Against the government by business the first great national unity that entered the American consciousness they began to erect the state, the national government at Washington.

No one meant to end government by business and substitute for it government by the people. Not for a moment. We devised a new set of checks and balances, like that between the various branches provided for in our Constitution, a new political organism which should equal and coexist with the one we already had. The government personified by Mr. Roosevelt was the check and balance to the government personified by Mr.

Harriman and Mr. Morgan. Governments never die but merely recede in the national consciousness, like the old clothes which we keep in the attic. Thus revolutions never effect a revolution; democracy is only a Troy built upon nine other prehistoric Troys: beneath, you find aristocracy, rule by divine right, despotism, theocracy, and every other governance on which men in their invincible optimism have pinned their faith.

The revolution which Mr. Roosevelt brought about was the kind which exclaims loudly "malefactors of great wealth" while writing to Mr. Harriman "we are both practical men." It was the kind of revolution this country desired. The nation wished to eat its cake and have it, to retain government by business and have alongside it another government, as powerful, as interesting, as colorful, as rich in personalities, as the late autumn of pioneering had brought into gorgeous bloom.

Mr. Roosevelt's method with the new government was this: Senator Aldrich and Speaker Cannon representing the still powerful coexistent government by business in Congress, would call at the White House and tell the President just how far he could go and no further. They would emerge. A moment later the press in response to a summons would arrive. Mr. Roosevelt would say: "I have just sent for Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Cannon and forced them to accept my policy, etc." Nobody

was deceived. Unlike the philosopher who made all knowledge his province, Mr. Roosevelt made all knowledge his playground, and not only all knowledge but all the arts, including the art of government.

In Mr. Roosevelt's day the two governments, government by business and political government, existed side by side, of about equal proportions; and no one really wished either to overtop the other. We were indulging in revolution with our customary prudence.

The human passion for equality which had risen against the last of those dominant figures, the last and greatest of the pioneers, and started to set up representatives of the public as great as they were, was singularly fortunate in its first manifestations. It "found a man," in that most amazing jack-of-all-trades, Mr. Roosevelt.

If business had its array of extraordinary personalities, the rival establishment had its Roosevelt, who surrounded himself with a shining group of amateurs, Mr. Root, Mr. Knox, General Wood, James Garfield, Mr. Pinchot, Mr. Knox Smith, the "Tennis Cabinet," to all of whom he succeeded in imparting some vividness from his own abounding personality. If pioneers from the days of Daniel Boone on have been romantic, amateurs are equally romantic. It was romance against romance.

The balance between the two governments did not last long. Government by business was de-

clining. It was being extruded from the control of political affairs. Political government was rising. It was reaching out to control certain phases of business itself. The great pioneers of national industry were growing old. They were becoming self-conscious, vaguely aware of changing circumstances, casting about for solider foundations than "mere money getting," buying art and writing books, establishing foundations, talking foolishly about their "divine right," about the crime of "dying rich."

A race of gamblers came in their train who caricatured their activities. The great figures who were passing took long chances magnificently, pioneer fashion, "to strike it rich," to found industries or magnify avenues of trade. Their imitators, the Gateses, Morses, Heinzes, and —— took long chances vulgarly for the excitement there was in them.

Railroads had to be "rescued" from them. Wall Street had to organize its Vigilantes against them.

I went as a reporter to see —— once in New York and found him in his library drinking. He sent for his servant, ordered six bottles of champagne at once, and after his man had gone opened the whole six, one after another, on his library rug. He had to exhibit in some way his large manner of doing things, and this was the best way he could think of at the moment. He belonged to a fevered race, intoxicated with the idea of bigness,

juggling millions about to no more useful end than that of pouring champagne on a carpet. They were the *reductio ad absurdum* of the pioneer.

The public no longer put its faith blindly as before in those romantic figures, the great industrial pioneers, those Mississippi River pilots who knew every rock and reef in the river. Stripped of much power and prestige, no longer looked to without question for the safety of the country, that magnificent species, the great pioneer, disappeared. It is as dead and gone as that equally magnificent species the Mississippi pilot of Mark Twain's day.

The legitimate succession was the dynasty—it was the dynasty that destroyed belief in the divine right of kings—of the second generation, of the younger Stillman, of the younger Rockefeller, competent but unremarkable, of the younger Morgan, more capable than the rest, doubtless, but compare his countenance with the eagle mien of his predecessor.

I used often to discuss with Mr. Roosevelt the members of the dynasty. He had no illusions. We both knew well a second-generation newspaper proprietor, a young man of excellent character, as prudent as the earlier generation had been daring, a petty King who always had an aspiring Mayor of the palace at his elbow, inclined to go to sleep at his post from excessive watching of his property. As we would go over the names in the dynasty, Mr. Roosevelt would say almost invariably: "I

can't describe him better to you than to say he's another ———," naming our mutual acquaintance, one of the many of his sort into whose hands by inheritance the control of business has descended.

Whatever the reason is, whether the inertia of large organization and the weakening of competition have favored the remaining in power of the second generation, whether we have evolved but one great type, the pioneer, whose day is past, and have not yet differentiated the true business man any more than we have differentiated the true statesman; whether that psychological change which I have sought to trace, that denial of freedom which once was the pioneers'—the new laws, the hard restraints operating now upon business as upon everything else and enforcing conformity—there are today no Titans, no one stealing fire from the heaven of Progress for the benefit of the human race—unless Henry Ford—no Carnegies, Morgans, Rockefellers, Harrimans, of the blessed nineties.

The old sureness is gone. The great pioneers were never assailed by doubts: they went straight forward, wearing the blinkers of a single aim, which kept their eyes like those of harnessed horses in the narrow road; God was with them, Progress was with them, Public Opinion was with them, the government at Washington was with them.

But their successors, like everyone else, look over their shoulders and see the shadows: see the govern-

ment at Washington and attach a comic importance to that bewildered figure; just as the government at Washington looks over its shoulder and sees at New York the government by business, its traditional master, and wishing a master, is unaware that the twilight of the gods is come. And both see that greatest of all shadows, Public Opinion, the new monster of Frankenstein which everyone feeds with propaganda, and fears. These three things were all one in the bright days of the great pioneers, and in that perfect unity everyone was sure, so sure, and the few were free, so free!

Business no longer imposes itself upon the imagination through its extraordinary personalities. In vain do we seek to recover the past. In vain does the popular magazine fiction strive to furnish what life no longer does—the pioneer ideal, the hero who overcomes fire and flood and the machination of enemies and moves irresistibly forward to success, who believes in himself, whose motto is that the will is not to be gainsaid, whose life is one long Smile Week.

Vast propaganda exists to hold us true to the old faith; we read it as we used to read Sunday School fiction; but religion only sought its way into hearts within the covers of E. P. Roe when other channels began to close. We beat the bushes for the great, the kings that should come after Agamemnon. Monthlies of vast circulation tell us of every jack-of-all-trades who hits upon a million dollars. This

one found out how to sell patches for automobile tires. That one was an office boy who never knew when it became five o'clock in the afternoon. Our faith requires vast stirring.

To the gradual weakening of the idea that business was all-wise and all-powerful, the war greatly contributed. Before 1914 men would say confidently, "Ah, but business, the bankers, will not let the nations fight. They have only to pull the strings of the purse and there will be no money for the fighters." After hostilities began they would say with equal confidence: "It will be all over in six weeks. The bankers will not let it go on."

Business was, however, not only powerless to prevent war but it stood by impotent while the very foundations on which it itself rested were destroyed. One illusion went.

Then again, during the war unorganized private production failed. Publicly organized production was immensely successful. Governments the world over showed that the industrial mechanism could be made to run faster and turn out more than ever before. The illusion that business was a mystery understood only by initiates, the men "'big' financially," was shaken.

After the war was over the government organization for regulating production was abandoned. A period of chaos, rising prices, speculation, wasteful production, of luxuries, ensued and then a crash. One may explain all that happened in both cases

on the basis of the war. But business needed triumphs to restore its old place in the public consciousness, and it has had instead a catastrophe.

The weakness of business today is its division. Many financial leaders saw the depression that would follow peace. Frank A. Vanderlip, for one, came back from Europe in 1919 full of warnings. He counselled moderation. He urged deflation instead of further inflation. His advice was unpopular with those who saw profits from a sudden withdrawal of wartime restraints. And the consequence of his prudence, according to what he has told his friends, was his being forced to retire from the Presidency of the great Wall Street bank of which he had been head.

Henry Ford, moreover, is a destroyer of old illusions. He "defies economic laws." He does what business says is impossible. In a day of high prices he produces at an unprecedentedly low price. He does not cut wages. He finds a market where there is no market. To lower his costs he needs cheaper steel than he can buy, so he manufactures it himself cheaper than the great steelmakers can manufacture it. He operates independently of the "big business" group. Mr. Morgan sends for him and he declines to go. He grows vastly rich, proving that all the knowledge the men "'big' financially" have of the mystery of business is no knowledge at all, only rules made in their own interest.

And business never twice answers the same question in the same way. One week Mr. Morgan and the international bankers come to Washington and tell Mr. Harding that American credit must go into foreign trade. The next week equally "big" bankers from the interior visit the capital and tell the President that American credit must stay at home developing American industries. It is the same with the tariff. It is the same with the taxes. Business is not of one mind about anything.

A politician recently described business on errands of advice to Washington. "One bunch of fat boys with high hats and morning coats comes to Washington. The Administration holds out its nose wishing to be led by it. The fat boys decline the nose. They are not leading anybody. In deprecatory manner they say: 'Please drive North. We think that is the way.' They go. The next day another bunch of fat boys in high hats and morning coats arrives. Again the offer of the nose. Again the declination. And this time: 'Please drive South. We're sure that is the way.'"

The government strains its ear to catch the word from Wall Street. But there never was a time when business had less influence at Washington than now. It is divided in its own mind, it is ruled by second-rate men. Of two governments that have occupied a place in the popular consciousness,

government by business and government by parties, I do not know which is weaker. I do not know which has less unity and capacity to function, the Republican party or big business.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPER-PRESIDENT GOES DOWN IN THE GENERAL SMASH

WHEN we became doubtful, as pioneering drew to a close, that business served a social end; when, becoming jealous of its great and irresponsible power, we started to set up an equal or greater authority in Washington, we followed the line of least resistance; we did the easy and obvious thing; we had recourse to a one man government.

We magnified the office of President and satisfied that primitive instinct in us which must see the public welfare and the public safety personified in a single individual, something visible, tangible, palpable. The President speaks and you read about him in the daily press; the President poses and you see him in the movies and feel assured, as in smaller realms under simpler conditions people were able to see their monarch dressed and equipaged in ways that connected him with all the permanence of the past, a symbol of stability, wisdom, and the divine favor.

If the trappings are lacking, imagination and the

emotions supply their moral equivalent. Of our little temporary king no one must speak evil; no voice may be raised in criticism.

His wife, up till some fourth of March an elderly country woman grown dull in the monotony of village life or worn with the task of pushing an unambitious husband forward to power, looking her most natural when in the frankness of early morning unpreparedness she ran in her apron across the street to gossip with the wife of a neighbor, becomes to the awed eyes of Washington women, quite "beautiful." You hear them say it of every —let us quote the illuminating phrase—every "first lady of the land."

When Burke said that aristocracy was the most natural thing in the world he did not go half far enough. The most natural thing in the world, the thing which is always repeating itself under no matter whatever form of government exists, is an autocracy. In national emergencies, in times of peril, people put their fate in one man's hands; as in the late war when Mr. Wilson was made by common consent a greater autocrat than any Czar of all the Russias.

The herd instinctively follows one authority. The mob is single-headed. All the traditions of the race lead back toward despotism and it is easier to revert toward something primitive than to go forward toward something higher in the scale of development.

And, moreover, the vital contacts of our lives are with authority imposed from above. Our childhood is controlled by the autocracy of the family. Education disposes of our hours, forces our inclinations, represses our individuality, and turns us out stamped with a uniform mark, the finished product of its unvarying course. The single head of the classroom is the teacher. The single head of the school is the principal, of all the schools the Superintendent.

More important still, our economic lives are at the disposal of autocracy. We earn our livings under foremen and managers. Everywhere is the boss who says to us "Do this or starve." He represents to us not only authority but wisdom. The organization out of which proceeds to us the beneficent results of food and clothing operates because he is endowed with a knowledge which we have not. "He knows about it all, he knows, he knows."

In all the essential everyday relations of life we have never been able to evolve any higher organization than that of the chieftain and his tribe. We read about democracy in the newspapers; once every two years or every four years we go through certain motions which vaguely relate to democracy, and which are not convincing motions.

Democracy is an artificial edifice imposed upon a society which is in all other than its political aspects entirely primitive. All our direct experiences are of one man power. It is the only organization

we actually know at first hand. We trust to it for the means to live. We revert to it politically whenever it becomes an issue of life and death, and even in lesser emergencies.

So it came about that when we determined to have a government at Washington independent of and better representing the social will, whatever that might come to be, than the government of business we had recourse to that one form of rule which is ever present in our consciousness, the only form under which the race has lived long enough to have any real faith in it.

The new social ideal had not sufficiently taken form to utilize all the complex institutions which existed in this country. Business was at that time intrenched in Congress. It would have been a huge, an impossible task, to re-make Congress, especially when no one knew definitely what purpose should animate the re-making. It was so much easier to find one man than to find many men. It is so much easier for a people which does not know where it is going but means to go there to choose one man, and by an act of faith endow him with the divination of leadership, than it is to have a national will and express it through numerous representatives.

The amplified executive is a sort of blind pool of the national purposes. Creating an autocracy is an act of faith; democracy is work. And faith is so much easier than work.

We did not think of it thus, as an exhibition of political inertia, as a reversion to an outworn type. On the contrary, we were immensely pleased with our innovation. As usual the United States had made an immense contribution to the art of government. We were repeating the race history of governments, as a child resumes in his life the race history of the human kind. We had got so far as to evolve that oldest of human institutions—autocracy, a mild, denatured autocracy. But we were as proud of it as a boy is when he put on paper with a pencil the very picture which his stone age ancestor cut laboriously into a walrus tooth.

Our President had more power than the King of England, we boasted, more than the Emperor of Germany. The monarchies of Europe were obsolete because they preserved autocracy out of the darkness of the Middle Ages. Our government was in the forefront of progress because it had created autocracy out of the suffrage of the people.

And how clever we were with the restrictions of our written constitution with its exact balance of powers, executive, legislative, and judicial. The Fathers had builded wiser than they knew in writing an instrument by which the carefully distributed authority might be well reconcentrated; as if they were the first to use words whose import depended on the point of view of those who interpreted them!

Acres of space in the newspapers were covered

with gratulatory articles proving that the dominating executive was the inevitable unifying principle in our disjointed and not otherwise workable government.

Ours was a government by parties, so the argument ran, and the President was the head of his party. As a matter of fact the writers of the Constitution had not conceived of a government by parties. What they had in mind was what they had before them in the Constitutional Convention of which they were a part, a government by the best and ablest men of the community, who should meet together and select the executive; who should equally through the state legislature choose the Senators. The rôle of job brokers was the last thing they imagined themselves to be creating. Parties came later. Ours was not originally a government of parties. It is hardly a government by parties today. So there was nothing inevitable about this great reason why the Executive should be the element in our system which would hold it together and make it work.

Nor until the beginning of this century did it ever occur to us that the President was the head of his party. The control of the organization had been in other hands, in Hanna's or Quay's or Cameron's, or divided among a group of men like these three, who represented the interests of business in the parties, and often also in the Senate.

The idea that the executive was the party's head

was merely a happy afterthought which was adopted to justify the resort to the line of least resistance in creating a stronger government at Washington, the concentration upon one man to represent the national will. We had simply done what other peoples had so often done in the history of mankind. When the English wished to weaken the rule of the great barons they magnified the office of the King. When we wished to get away from the rule of the barons of business we magnified the office of our elective King, the President. We invented new reasons for an old expedient.

And by making the amplified executive the head of his party, which we did—for the Quays and Hannas speedily disappeared under the new order and left no successors—we set him to sawing off the limb on which he sat. If his authority rested on that of his party then to be firm the authority of the party must be firm. For parties to endure and be strong there must be a certain quality of permanence about them. They must not rest upon personalities but on principles and jobs, principles for the disinterested and for those whose interests are expressed in the principles, and jobs for those whose interests are less large and indirect.

Of parties with the executive as their head nothing remained but their name. The only nexus there could be between the executive and the mass of voters was personal. One year a party was Roosevelt, the next year it was Taft and the dis-

tance between Roosevelt and Taft was the distance between East and West. A little later it even changed its name and voted in another column because Roosevelt had adopted a new party name and gone unto a new column. Four years later it split up and much of it went to Wilson, who temporarily rallied a personal following just as Roosevelt had done.

And because the dispensing of jobs was an unseemly occupation for the executive we reduced by law the patronage that was available for the sustenance of parties. Thus we substituted personal caprice for the permanency of parties and at the same time cut down the practical means of holding organizations together. At the same time the decay of government by business left parties no longer an instrument of the economic will of the nation.

Thus the executive headship was wholly inconsistent with government by parties, upon which our magnified President was supposed to rest. A further inconsistency was that we adopted another theory for strengthening one man power. This was that the President was the leader of the people. Have we a government by parties there? Not at all; the power of the executive rests upon something outside of and superior to parties.

If the legislative did not respond to pressure he might "go to the people," as it was called, through the newspapers and upon the stump. He might

discipline the recalcitrant by stirring up public sentiment against them. He might build up a personal following to such an extent that his party must have it in order to win. He might encourage the movement away from parties by attaching people to ideas and measures, policies that the party had declined to accept. In this theory of executive power it was conceded that parties were not to be trusted. In the other it was held that they were a necessary link between the dissociate branches of government.

It is no exaggerated notion that executive control of parties contributed to the disintegration of party government. It is nothing more than a statement of what actually happened. Roosevelt broke up the Republican party nationally. He left it with its name covering an agglomeration of groups and blocs and personal followings, supporters of various interests difficult to reconcile, whose votes fluctuate from year to year.

Mr. Hughes, the same kind of executive and party leader as governor of New York, left the Republicans of that state in the hands of the little local banditti. Mr. La Follette, following the same methods as Governor of Wisconsin, left no one in that state definitely a Republican or a Democrat. Every voter there is the personal follower of some chieftain.

And what virtue is there in the theory that the Executive alone represents the national point of

view, that he alone speaks "for the country?" Political inertia always finds good excuses.

There are reasons why the President should try to represent the country as a whole, since he is elected in a nationwide balloting. But there is no reason why he should succeed in representing the country as a whole, why he should have a national point of view.

Why should Mr. Harding have a vast understanding of national problems and a clear sense of the country's will? A little while ago he was a Senator, and the supposition that the Executive alone has the national point of view implies that a Senator has not that point of view. Mr. Harding is chosen President and immediately upon his election by some magic virtue of his office he is endowed with insight and imagination which he did not possess as Senator.

Mr. Harding is a good average President, a typical President, whether of the United States or of a business corporation, just the kind of man to put at the head of a going concern where a plodding kind of safeness is required of the executive. We shall do well, should our standards of public life remain what they are, if we have three Presidents superior to Mr. Harding in energy or originality of mind, during the whole of the coming century. But why should Mr. Harding understand or represent the national point of view?

Mr. Harding lived his life in the indolent com-

fortable mental atmosphere of a small town. His horizon was narrow and there was no force in him which made him seek to widen it. His public experience before coming to Washington consisted of brief service in the Ohio State legislature and a term as Lieutenant-Governor of Ohio. His service in the Senate at Washington was short and it was beginner's work, undertaken in the spirit of a man who finds the upper house a pleasant place in which to pass the latter years of a never strenuous life.

His point of view on national problems was a second-hand point of view. He knew about them what his party had said about them, in its platforms, on the stump, in the press. He accepted the accepted opinions. No magic wrought by election to the Presidency could make of him or of anyone else a great representative of the national purpose or endow him or anyone else with deep understanding of national problems.

Of recent Presidents Mr. Taft failed so completely to understand his people and express its will that after four years in office he could command the support of only two states when seeking re-election. Mr. Wilson after four years had so far failed that only the incredible stupidity of his opponents enabled him to succeed himself; and again so far, that his second term ended in a tragedy. The floundering of Mr. Harding is apparent to every eye.

Only under two Presidents has the theory of

executive domination of the Government succeeded, and not completely under them. Congress rose against Mr. Roosevelt in the last year or two of his administration. Congress was not of Mr. Wilson's party, and was thus out of his control in the last two years of his administration. Mr. Taft lacked the will to rule. Mr. Harding is feebler than Mr. Taft, and party authority, one of the pillars of executive power and responsibility, is now completely broken down. A system which is successful only half the time cannot be called workable.

Let us examine the circumstances under which the Executive was able to prevail over Congress and effect a limited sort of one man government. They are not likely soon to repeat themselves.

Mr. Roosevelt was an extraordinary personality. Only Andrew Jackson, among our Presidents, was as picturesque as he, only Andrew Jackson had a popular following comparable to his.

Both of them represented strong democratic movements,—Jackson the extrusion of the landed aristocracy, in favor of the masses, from their preferred position in our political life; Mr. Roosevelt, the similar extrusion of the business aristocracy, in favor of the masses from the preferred position they had gained in our political life. Like agitations of the political depths, finding expression in personalities as unusual as those of Jackson and Roosevelt, will give us from time to time executives who may carry everything before them; but only

emergencies like this and one other will make the President supreme.

And even then it is easy to overstate the power of the Executive as it was exercised by Mr. Roosevelt. The Colonel lived by picturesque exaggeration. If he went to South America it was to discover a river and find animals that the eye of man never rested on before or since. He read more books than it was humanly possible to read and not become a pallid bookworm. He pursued more interests than mere man can have. He exercised daily as only a pugilist exercises briefly when in training.

He had the gusto of the greatest amateur of all time and enjoyed the immunity which is always granted to amateurs, that of never being measured by professional standards. When you might have been noting a weakness in one direction he was diverting you by an enormous exhibition of versatility in another. He had the capacity of seeming, and the semblance was never penetrated. He seemed to bestride Washington like a Colossus. Actually his rule was one long compromise with Aldrich and Cannon, the business leaders of Congress, which he represented as a glorious triumph over them.

One man government was developed much further under Mr. Wilson than under Mr. Roosevelt. Mr. Harding's predecessor entered office as the expression of that movement toward a govern-

ment based on numbers rather than on wealth, which the Colonel had so imperfectly effected. There had been a reaction under Taft; there was a new determination under Wilson, and a new concentration on the executive.

Poor, bookish, without the friendships in the business world which Mr. Roosevelt had had, having few contacts with life, Mr. Wilson embraced the idea of putting business in its place passionately, where Mr. Roosevelt played with it as he played with everything else.

Mr. Wilson was by temperament an autocrat. An illustration of how personal was his government was his treatment of his enemies. His bitterness against Henry Lane Wilson, the Republican Ambassador to Mexico, is well known. A year or two after the dispute was over, Henry Lane Wilson's son came up for examination to enter the Diplomatic service. He passed at the top of the list. President Wilson heard of his success and directed that he should receive no appointment. He carried his enmity to the second generation. The law which would have given young Mr. Wilson a place meant nothing under his personal government.

As Anatole France says of Robespierre, he "*était optimiste qui croyait á la vertue.*" Those who are "optimists and believe in virtue," remarks the French author, end by killing men. Wilson in a revolution would have conducted a Terror, as indeed during the war he did conduct a sort of

legal terror among pacifists and radicals. Roosevelt belonged to the other school in the conduct of affairs which Anatole France praises because it never forgets that men are "*des mauvais singes.*" In a revolution Roosevelt would have cut off no more heads than would be necessary to make a good show.

Moreover, when Mr. Wilson entered office his party had been long out of power. Its leaders in the House and Senate were not firmly established. Unlike Cannon and Aldrich, of the Roosevelt day, they did not represent business in the national legislature. They had no authority except the purely factitious authority created by the accident of seniority. They were easily dominated from the White House.

Coming into power at such a moment, possessing such a temperament, representing such a popular movement, Mr. Wilson readily became the most perfect example of the concentrated executive that we have yet had. But even his one man government was attacked from the outset. His personality proved repellent. An intellectual is so unfamiliar an object in America as to seem almost a monstrosity, and his ascendancy would not have lasted beyond two years if the war had not come.

War is the other great cause that leads to autocracy in popular governments. In times of common danger we revert to the herd with the single leadership. We resort to the only form of rule of which

we have any experience in our daily lives, the only form in which the race has yet developed any lasting faith. From the time when war threatened, with the invasion of Belgium, till the time when it ended with the armistice, Mr. Wilson became what any President may become under like circumstances, what Mr. Wilson's temperament especially fitted him to become—an absolute dictator.

When we think of the powerful executive as the natural development of the American system, imparting that unity to our government which the makers of the Constitution in their zeal for checks and balances refused to give it, we are overimpressed by the phenomena of Roosevelt and Wilson and do not make sufficient allowances for the conditions which made their power inevitable. So impossible is it for authority to remain permanently in the hands of the executive that we are now witnessing its spontaneous movement away from the White House—toward, well for the moment I should say, toward nowhere.

A distinguished alienist tells me that the desire for power over your fellow man is an unmistakable sign of paranoia, not necessarily paranoia amounting to insanity, but the same kind of paranoia which makes history amusing. If that is true, then we are in an era of perfect sanity at Washington. No one, no one, in the White House, in the Capitol, in Wall Street, the capitol of business, or back

among the home folks, as far as I can learn, wants power—and responsibility.

The picture I have drawn, quoting a bright young observer at the capital of what happens when Business arrives in Washington is the picture of our whole present national political organization. "A bunch of tall-hatted fat boys comes. The governmental nose is thrust out awaiting the guiding hand. The guiding hand is put unostentatiously behind the back." It is the same when the organ of leading is extended from the White House for the hand of leadership at the Capitol, or, as happens, as often the organ of leading at the Capitol awaits the hand of leadership at the White House.

Power is in transition and we do much inconsistent thinking about where it is and where it should be. We deliberately elected a weak executive, to retrieve the blessed days of McKinley, the old equilibrium and co-ordination of the equal and co-ordinate branches of our government. Yet when things go badly in Congress, as they mostly do, the critics exclaim that the President should be firm and "assert his authority" on the hill. Mr. Harding himself said, over and over again, "This is no one man job at Washington." Yet we read that his face assumes a "determined expression"—I have myself never seen it—and he sends for the leaders in Congress.

We haven't executive domination and we haven't

anything in its place. We voted to go back to the nineties, but we haven't got there. There is no Mark Hanna speaking for business and for party to make the system work. We have the willessness of the blessed days in our National Heartbreak House, but we haven't the will somewhere else to act and direct. Not even seven million majority is enough to bring back the past. In spite of "landslides" the course is always forward, and I use "forward" not in the necessarily optimistic sense of those who were once so sure of Progress.

The initiative, so far as there is any, has passed to Congress.

And so far as I can see, it is likely to remain with Congress, until some new turn of events brings us back the strong executive. For, after all, Congress chose Mr. Harding. The Senators picked him at Chicago. With party bosses gone, they are about all that remains of the party, and there is no reason why they should not go on naming Presidents. And the power of presidents will not rise much above its source.

The autocratic President goes inevitably the way its prototype the autocrat went. The loins that produce them are sufficiently fertile. Primogeniture brought forth feeble kings. The nominating system called on for a great man every four years yields many feeble ones. There will be many Hardings to one Roosevelt or Wilson. Party government which might reinforce a feeble president is weak.

Government by business has lost its confidence and authority. The great discovery of the first decade of this century for making this government of ours work is already in the discard.

So at a critical moment when government by Progress and government by business have broken down, government by one man at Washington has also gone. The war made the autocratic executive in the person of Mr. Wilson intolerable. It also destroyed the basis for national concentration upon the executive.

We need a new picture in our heads of what government should be, what its limits should be when it faces such vital problems as interfering with God's time, and where its authority should center. We have none.

CHAPTER V

LOOKING FOR ULTIMATE WISDOM—IN THE BOSOM OF THÉRÈSE

We now pursue further the search for authority. We shall surely find "divine right" somewhere, now that business has lost it. Someone certainly has the final word about the pictures to put in our heads. Ah! there is the public, the imputation of a miraculous quality to whose opinion has a curious history.

Everybody agrees that we owe most of the pleasant illusions upon which this democracy of ours is based to Rousseau. This Swiss sentimentalist about humanity, whose ideas have so profoundly affected the history of the last century and a half, was a convinced believer that perfect good sense resided in the bosom of the natural man, the man "born free and equal" of our Declaration of Independence.

Rousseau could find this simple wisdom which was his delight in the most unexpected places. He describes his mistress Thérèse with whom he lived many happy years: "Her mind is what

nature has made it; cultivation is without effect. I do not blush to avow that she has never known how to read, although she writes passably. When I went to live in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs I had opposite my windows a clock face on which I tried during several months to teach her to tell time. She can scarcely do it even now. She has never known in their order the twelve months of the year, and she does not know a single figure in spite of all the pains I have taken to explain them to her. . . . But this person, so limited and, if you wish, so stupid, has excellent judgment on occasions of difficulty. Often in my troubles she has seen what I did not see myself; she has given me the best advice to follow. She has pulled me out of dangers into which I rushed blindly. . . . The heart of my Thérèse was the heart of an angel. (*Le cœur de ma Thérèse était celui d'un ange.*)"

It would be amusing to trace our belief in the good sense of man, in the wisdom and justice of public opinion, back to a philosopher's delight in a female moron; but that would be too great a paradox for a serious discussion of today's crisis in popular government. The truth probably is that Rousseau reached *a priori* the conclusions about the sound sense of the simple and natural man that captivated a society so simple and natural as our own was in the eighteenth century, and then stumbled upon such convincing evidence in the per-

son of Thérèse that he had to keep it by him all the rest of his days.

And where after all has there been found any better evidence for our belief in the soundness and justice of public opinion than was furnished by the unlettered and unteachable Thérèse, who had "le cœur d'un ange" and "devant les dames du plus haut rang, devant les grands et les princes, ses sentiments, son bon sens, ses réponses et sa conduite lui out tiré l'estime universelle"?

To accept the doctrine of the rightness of public opinion you must believe that there resides in every man, even in the most unpromising man, of the mental level of Thérèse, "si bornée et, si l'on veut, si stupide," the capacity to be, like her, "d'un conseil excellent dans les occasions difficiles."

The doctrine of the rightness of public opinion, however, never required proof. It was a political necessity. The world at the time when modern democracies had their birth accepted government only because it rested upon divine right. The government of men by mere men has always been intolerable.

The new democracies which were to take the place of the old kingdoms had to have some sanction other than the suffrages of the people. Room had to be found in them somewhere for divine right. Those who established the modern system could never have sold self-government to the people as self government. There had to be

some miracle about it, something supernatural, like that marvel which turned a mere man into a King and gave him that power of healing by touch which was exercised in Galilee, so that the laying on of his hands cured the king's evil.

The miracle was accomplished somewhere in the process through which your opinion and my opinion and Thérèse's opinion became public opinion. Just as the anointment or the coronation turned a mere human being by a miracle into the chosen of God ruling by divine right, so by some transmutation which does not take place before the eyes, mere human opinion becomes itself the choice of God, ruling by divine right.

If you doubt that the founders of modern democracy had to carry over into their systems the old illusions about divine right, read what Thomas Jefferson, more or less a free thinker, quoted by Mr. Walter Lippmann in his *Public Opinion*, has to say about the divine basis for popular government: "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which He keeps alive that sacred fire which might otherwise escape from the earth."

That "deposit for substantial and genuine virtue" was public opinion. Nothing was lost of the sanctions of monarchic government when we changed to popular government.

Since the days of Jefferson we have ceased to be an agricultural people and we can no longer derive the authority of our government from the Rousseauist notion that the farmer, being near to nature, thrusting his hands into the soil, was the choice of God and ruled by a kind of divine right. But "aucune réligion n'est jamais morte, ni ne mourra jamais."

Let us examine the doctrine of Jefferson. Public opinion ruled by divine right because, in this country and in his day, it was the opinion of farmers, who were "the chosen people of God whose breasts He has made the peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue."

When we ceased to be a nation of farmers did we abandon the basis of our government in divine right? Not in the least. We broadened our ground to cover the added elements of the community and went along further with Rousseau than Jefferson had need to do; we said that the breasts of all men "He has made the peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue." The art of uncovering their substantial and genuine virtue, this quality in Thérèse which drew down upon her universal esteem for her good sense and her sound sentiments, is the art of arriving at public opinion.

The legend of public opinion is thus accounted for; first, you will observe, it was politically necessary to assert the inspiration of public opinion, for divine right had to reside somewhere.

Second, in a democracy the press and public men had to flatter the mass of voters and readers by declaring on every possible occasion that wisdom reposed in their breasts. And third, the public mind differed so from the ordinary thinking mind that, to put its conclusions in a favorable light, men had to assume some supernatural quality, some divine "deposit for substantial and genuine virtue."

The public did not think, in the ordinary sense, yet its decisions were more right than the carefully elaborated decisions of those who did think; the wonder of Thérèse over again, who "si bornée et si stupide" gave such excellent advice on difficult occasions. No processes by which results were reached could be perceived by the trained mind. The mystery of the public mind was as great as the mystery of intuitions is to the logical or the mystery of poetry is to the prosaic. Clearly, a miracle; clearly, a deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.

When modern democracy got its start, kings by their folly had shaken faith in their divine right. In a similar way at this moment, public opinion by its excesses has made men question whether any "deposit for substantial and genuine virtue" has been placed in human breasts upon which states may rely for justice and wisdom.

Walter Lippmann's book, *Public Opinion*, with its destructive analysis of the public mind, is a

symptom of those doubts with which the war has left us. The years from 1914 on furnished the most perfect exhibition of public opinion and its workings that the world has ever seen. You saw on a grand scale its miraculous capacity for instant formation and, if you are sufficiently detached now, you look back and doubt whether what was revealed was a "deposit for substantial and genuine virtue."

Both sides to the conflict resembled nothing so much as prehistoric tribes meeting accidentally in the night and, precipitated into panic, fighting in the belief that each was being attacked by the other.

Public opinion in France and England felt that the war was defensive. Public opinion in Germany was equally sure that Germany was only defending herself. Either the German Thérèse or the French Thérèse and the English Thérèse and the American Thérèse must have been wrong. The fight could not have been defensive on both sides. And if Thérèse is ever so wrong as this, the whole case of the divine rightness of public opinion falls.

And not only do we know that some Thérèse, perhaps all the Thérèses, made a mistake in this instance, but we have come to feel that whenever danger arises Thérèse is inevitably wrong; her mind, such as it is, closes up and she fails to show those *sentiments* and that *bon sens* which drew down the applause of the princes and the persons *du haut rang*

who have been praising the deposit of virtue that she carries in her breast.

We have watched the course of Thérèse confronted by other and smaller fears since the close of the war, and we have reached the conclusion that Thérèse always reacts a certain way. In that large range of situations which may be artfully presented to her simple mind as perils she is no longer *d'un conseil excellent;* her heart *d'un ange* hardens; she abandons her babies quite unfeelingly at the hospital of the *Nouveaux Nés.*

Therefore you do not reach the "deposit for virtue" by simply employing an intelligence unencumbered by mental processes. You must at least assure that intelligence against fear, a serious limitation upon the doctrine of an infallible public opinion.

Students of public opinion will for a long time go back to the period of the war for their materials. Opinion was then unmistakable. The methods by which it was formed were clear. In times of great peril men throw off their polite disguises and are frank; so too are institutions.

The making of opinion became an official function in which we all co-operated. We bound ourselves voluntarily not to publish and not to regard any information inconsistent with the state of mind which it was deemed expedient to create and maintain. We probably always in the forming of opinion tacitly impose voluntary censor-

ships, but they are so habitual, so unconscious, so covered with traditional hypocrisy, that it is difficult to bring them into the light.

Conscious self-deception to the good end of keeping ourselves united and determined was during the war a great virtue. Playing upon prejudice, rousing the depths of the primitive mind in man, was a laudable act of patriotism.

What happened then was only an exaggeration of what happens all the time, for war makes no new contributions to the art of self-government. In war we merely throw off the restraints of peace and impose others which operate in the reverse direction. In peace we are shamefaced about direct killing; in war we brag of it. In peace we are shamefaced about manufacturing public opinion; in war it is our patriotic duty.

No, war has made us rather doubtful about Thérèse. After all Rousseau was a prejudiced witness. When you take to your bosom a lady who cannot learn to tell time by the clock, you have to make out a case for her—or for yourself. When like Jefferson and his successors you take to your bosom the public, you have to make out a case for it, for the deposit for substantial and genuine virtue that you rely upon.

The war revealed at once the immense power and the immense dangers of public opinion when its full force is aroused and one hundred million people come to think—thinking is not the word—

to feel, as one man. Minorities, the great corrective in democracy, disappeared. They had their choice of going to jail or bowing to the general will.

Few realized this alternative, so irresistible was the mob impulse, awakened by the sense of common danger, even to individuals ordinarily capable of maintaining their detachment. The primitive instinct of self-preservation subdued all capacity for independent thinking, so that one who has ordinarily the habit of making up his own mind, a most difficult habit to maintain in modern society, can not look back on himself during the war without a sense of shame. Romain Rolland, in *Clérambeault*, pictures the devastating effect of public opinion at its mightiest upon the individual conscience.

The mechanism by which this state of mind was created was unconcealed. The government reserved to itself the right to suppress truth or to put out untruth for the common good. Private organizations of endless number co-operated to this laudable end. The press submitted itself to a voluntary censorship, passing the responsibility for what it printed over to society whose general end of maintaining unity for the real or imaginary necessities of self-defense it served. A lynch law of opinion was established by common consent.

What went on during the war goes on, though less openly and less formidably, all of the time.

Everyone realizes the immense power of public opinion. Many seek to direct its formation. The government conducts all of the time a vast propaganda, always with a certain favor of the press.

We submit always to a certain voluntary censorship, not so conscious as that which existed during the war but none the less real. We receive upon the whole the information which is good for us to receive. We are all a little afraid of public opinion, its tyranny, its excesses, its blind tendencies. We do not find it, as Jefferson thought we should, a "deposit for substantial and genuine virtue," and we are all more or less consciously trying to make it one; that is the process of rendering modern democracy workable; but we may not be all unprejudiced about what the deposit should be or scrupulous about the means of improving it.

The part which the press plays in this process is peculiar. When editors or correspondents meet together the speaker addresses them invariably as, "You makers of public opinion," but the last responsibility which journalism cares to assume is the making of public opinion.

This disinclination began with the exclusion of the editor's opinion from the news columns. Gradually, it extended to the exclusion of his opinion from the editorial pages and finally to its exclusion from his own mind. I am speaking only of tendencies, not of their complete realization, for

there are notable exceptions among the greater dailies of this country.

This movement is at its strongest in the nation's capital, for official Washington likes to live in an intellectual vacuum, and journalism strives successfully to please. With the world crashing about his ears the editor of the *Star*, the best newspaper in the capital, finds this to say:

"The Crown Prince of Japan and the Prince of Wales are young men destined for great parts in world affairs. They are now qualifying for their work.

"Last year the former took his first look around in the occidental world. He was everywhere most cordially received, and returned home informed and refreshed by what he had seen and heard. His vision, necessarily, was considerably enlarged.

"The latter is now taking his first look around in the oriental world. In a few days he will land in Japan and be the guest of the country for a month. The arrangements for his entertainment are elaborate, and insure him with a delightful and a profitable visit. That he will return home informed and refreshed by his travels is certain.

"The war has produced a new world, which in many things must be ordered in new ways. Young men for action; and here are two young men who when they get into action and into their stride will be prominent and important in the world picture."

But if a newspaper rigidly excludes its editor's opinions from its columns, it is singularly hospitable to all other opinions. The President twice a week may edit the papers of the entire country, or Mr. Hughes may do it every day,—or Mr. Hoover or Mr. Daugherty for that matter, even having extended to him the privilege of anonymity which editors used to keep to themselves, as a device for giving force and effect to their ideas.

The President "sees the press" Tuesdays and Fridays, volunteering information or answering questions. Mr. Hughes holds daily receptions. Everyone else big enough to break into print follows the same practice.

A curious modesty prevails. Every public man loves to see his name in the newspapers, yet no one of them at these conferences will assume responsibility for what he says. All of them resort to the editorial practice of anonymity.

The rule is that the correspondents must not quote Mr. Harding or Mr. Hughes or anyone else.

They must not write "Mr. Harding said" or "Mr. Hughes said." They must print what Mr. Harding or Mr. Hughes said as a fact; that is, they must put the authority of their paper behind it or, if they doubt, they must assign for it "a high authority," thus putting the authority of their paper behind it at one remove.

The editor, having excluded his own opinions

from his news columns, opens his news columns to Mr. Harding's or Mr. Hughes's opinions, giving no guide to the reader whether he is printing fact or opinion, and, if obviously opinion, as to whose opinion it is.

The rule is, nothing but news in the news column. The news is, "Mr. Harding said so and so." But what is printed is, "so and so is a fact" or, "so and so the paper believes on unimpeachable authority to be a fact."

This official control of news columns goes further. Not only, according to the rules, must the source of certain information be regarded as a confidence but essential facts themselves may not be disclosed.

One of the most remarkable uses of the news columns to create public opinion was that of Attorney-General Palmer whose several announcements of red revolution in the United States startled the country two years ago. A series of sensational plots was described. Very soon every intelligent correspondent felt sure that Mr. Palmer was largely propaganding. But to say so would have been to violate that law against the expression of opinion in news columns, so essential to the truth and accuracy of our press. Moreover, if my memory is correct, somewhere in the series the Attorney-General told the press, in confidence, that he was putting forth his stories of revolution for a purpose. But one does not print confidences.

In this case the news was that Attorney-General Palmer was issuing stories of discovered revolutionary plots to combat a certain radicalism in the labor movement. As printed it was that Attorney-General Palmer said—he permitted his name to be used—that he had discovered revolutionary plots.

But the uncritical reader does not ask himself whether the Attorney-General may not be lying. And even if he were inclined to do so the headline throws him off his guard, for in the limited space available for captions, mere assertions tend to become facts. As it reached the reader's mind the fact that Mr. Palmer was avowedly issuing propaganda became the fact that evidences of a great Bolshevist plot against our institutions were being discovered almost daily.

There are disadvantages in the official editing of news columns. The official does not always escape by shifting responsibility to the editor. The British during the Washington Conference introduced an improvement. They put out propaganda which had no authority at all. This the newspapers either had to leave out or to print on their own authority.

Lord Riddell had "no official connection with the British delegation." He had moreover a perfect alibi. There was Sir Arthur Willert, the official spokesman, who knew nothing and told nothing. Riddell's was a private enterprise. He

was just a journalist willing to share with other journalists what information he collected. Just a journalist? Well, it was true that "Lloyd George had asked him to stay on" when he was on the point of departing. But that was a confidence and under the rules the press does not print confidences.

Riddell's disclosures were perfectly timed. The best of them came out in the morning when afternoon correspondents must either rush them through as facts — they could not even say "on the highest authority"—or explain to their editors why they had been beaten by their rivals.

Riddell is one of the British Premier's intimates. A lawyer turned newspaper proprietor, he brings out the *News of the World*, a London Sunday publication, sensational and trashy, of which 3,500,000 copies or some such preposterous number are sold. He started in during the war as a spokesman for the British Premier. He kept it up at the Paris Conference. And at Washington he scored his greatest success.

What he had said at his seance was, "Now, of course, I don't know, but I imagine the Conference will do thus and so." He was delightfully irresponsible, having no official connection. He could leak when he had anything to leak. He could guess, near the truth or far from the truth, for, after all, he was only "imagining." He joked. He indulged in buffoonery. He put out propa-

ganda when he wished. But he mixed enough truth with it all so that the correspondents thronged his meetings. So far as there was publicity at the Conference, he was that publicity.

There was nothing of the great man about him. He did not pretend to be a statesman. He did not take himself seriously. He reached out for his public in the same undress way that he does in his Sunday newspaper. "Ex-tra-ter-ri-to-ri-al-ity," he would say, "that's a long word. I never heard it before I came here." "Kow Loon, where is the place anyway?" You felt that for the British Empire these places and issues were trivialities.

He was familiar, quite inoffensively. "The highly intelligent seal of the Associated Press—was it Mr. Hood here?—must have been under the table in the committee room when he got this story. He knows more about it than I do." He was humorous. "The Conference means to do good and, according to the well known rule—what is it?—Oh, yes! 'Cast your bread upon the waters'—and by—er—a certain repercussion we all expect to benefit."

It was not said cynically. It was no effort to be funny. It was natural and inevitable. Lord Riddell himself did good to the press, and by a certain repercussion the British Empire benefited. It was a publicity "stunt" that has never been equalled. Never before did one man have world opinion so much in his hands. Only Riddell's per-

LORD RIDDELL

sonality, his friendliness, his apparent disingenuousness, his trifling, enabled him to exercise his power—these and the immense demand for publicity, where aside from his there was little.

The hospitality of news columns is not extended to officials alone. A vast industry second only to that of news collecting has been built up for the purpose of conveying opinions to readers in the guise of news. Its constant growth is a proof of its success.

The reason for the opening of newspaper columns to it is commercial. A variety of interests and opinions tends to reflect itself, as at Paris, in a multiplicity of newspapers. The American newspaper proprietor has avoided competition by steadily restricting the expression of opinion first in the news columns and then on the editorial page, so as to offend as few of his readers as possible, and then opening his news columns to opinions which he could not approve on his editorial page, provided they could be disguised as news.

But the faults of public opinion as a governing force do not spring from an uncritical journalism, conducted in haste and under compulsion to be interesting rather than adequate, too little edited by its editors and too much edited by others. The trouble with Thérèse is her lack of mind. In spite of her good sense and habit of giving excellent advice she is *bornée et, si l'on veut, stupide.* We

do not find in her what Rousseau was convinced he found in her, "a deposit for substantial and genuine virtue."

We know more about the public mind today than Jefferson did when he wrote about it. We have studied the psychology of the mob and we know that the psychology of the public is not different. Like the mind of Thérèse, the public mind has never grown up; with this difference, that the mind of Thérèse never could grow up and the mind of the public, we hope, will.

The public mind is young. Only for a very few years in the history of the race has there been any such thing as a conscious public. Jefferson was right in thinking that its mind was not the sum of the individual minds: nevertheless, it is not a "deposit for virtue." Men act in a mass quite differently from the way they act as individuals, only unfortunately there is not any necessary divine rightness about the way they act: there is often divine wrongness.

We have built up the machinery for converting one hundred million widely scattered people into a public, for giving it a sense of community, but we have not at an equal rate built up a public mind.

With the telegraph, the wireless telephone, the standardized press, the instant bulletin going everywhere, we can stir the whole people as a mob, make it revert into a frightened herd, but we can not make it think.

The public is too young to have a developed mind. In a hundred generations it may have one.

This experiment in democracy is conducted in the faith that it will have one, that the mass of mankind may be lifted up so that there will be as much freedom of thinking in a democratic society as there once was in an aristocratic society. It is the bravest experiment in history but its success is afar off, Rousseau's belief in Thérèse to the contrary notwithstanding.

In the present state of undeveloped mind and overdeveloped machinery of communication public opinion is a great negative force. It does nothing constructive. It can only be thoroughly aroused by a suggestion of danger. Statesmen are both afraid of it and despise it, and between contempt and fear are reduced to temporary expedients.

So that when we speak of government by public opinion we speak of something that has been as badly shaken as government by business, or executive government or party government or any one of the various governments upon which we once relied. The war has made it almost as intolerable as it made autocracy, as practiced by Mr. Wilson.

Shall official Washington turn to public opinion as its guide? Official Washington is busy all the time with all the arts it used during the war shaping public opinion to its own ends. It must have been hard for a king's minister to believe in the divinity of the monarch he was gulling. And at

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any moment public opinion may belong to Mr. Hearst.

This new ruler by divine right is not going to be so easy to dethrone as his predecessors. No new Rousseau will discern a new Thérèse. Mr. Walter Lippmann would set up in its place the expert by divine right, but the expert is a palpable pretender.

The best hope for the present moment is perhaps to divide the public. Minorities based on interest will at least be constructive. Organized, they may offer an effective resistance. Out of them may come a development of the public mind.

If Jefferson were writing today he might say that the farm bloc contained the "deposit for substantial and genuine virtue." At any rate it tills the soil.

If we break up the threatening mass which the war has taught us to fear, there might be organized a thinkers' bloc. Thinking in this country certainly needs a bloc.

CHAPTER VI

SHALL WE FIND OUR SALVATION SITTING, LIKE MR. MELLON, ON A PILE OF DOLLARS

THE conditions which face Mr. Harding are like those which face the administrator of a corporation left by its old head and creator to the direction of an incompetent son. The young man is the nominal master of the business. He lacks confidence in himself and what is worse still his wife and mother lack confidence in him. They have fortified him with a brother-in-law as a right hand man. His brother-in-law knows little of the business and can never forget that he is the creature of his sister and her mother-in-law.

The administrator of this corporation wishes to obtain a decision upon policy. The proprieties require him to consult its nominal head. The young man, unsure of himself, must talk it over with the mentor whom his wife and mother have provided. He in turn proves no final authority but must discuss the question with his sister. Ultimately the widow who owns most of the stock must be approached. She hires others to run the

property, wonders why they do not run it. The very fact that the others could reach no decision makes her cautious about reaching one herself. The administrator goes vainly about this circle seeking for a "yes" or "no."

The government was simple when the public had faith in the social purposes of business and public opinion did not differ greatly from business opinion. Parties reflected the will of business. Authority was centered. Whether you said it resided in parties or in business or in public opinion made little difference. There was substantial agreement. A "yes" or "no" was easy.

Suppose Mr. Harding should be in doubt, as he is so often—today. He asks himself what is party opinion, what is business opinion, what is public opinion, or what is the opinion of some powerful minority which may turn an election against him.

His party has no opinion; it exists by virtue of its capacity to think nothing about everything and thus avoid dissensions. Business is of two minds and is moreover afraid of the public. It will assume no responsibility. Public opinion, what is it? Mr. Hearst's newspapers? Or the rest of the press? Or the product of the propaganda conducted from Washington? Or something that Mr. Harding may create himself if he will? Minority opinion is definite, but is it safe? Where is authority?

A return to those happy days when authority did

center somewhere, when in conducting the business you did not have to run around the whole circle seeing the young man, his wife, his brother-in-law, and the widow who inherited the property, is our constant dream. Let us get back to party government, exclaimed Mr. Harding; so the nation voted to do so, only to find there were neither parties nor party government.

Let us, then, it is suggested, found some new party that will "stand for something," that will synthesize in one social aim, the common element in the aims of various interests into which the country is divided. But no one can point out the common basis, the principle which the new party shall advocate.

Let us then have a better informed public opinion. Mr. Walter Lippmann in his new book upon the subject, despairing of the press, would put the making of public opinion in the hands of experts, collecting the truth with the impartiality of science.

We seek unity as perhaps the builders of Babel sought it after the confusion of tongues fell upon them.

One favorite hope of attaining it is through a new synthesis of business and politics. Government by business had worked. Let us return to Eden. Let us elect a business man President. One may substitute for President in this last sentence Governor or Mayor or Senator or Con-

gressman, for whatever the office is, this recipe is always suggested.

Thus, so it is piously hoped, we may get back to those good old times before we builded for ourselves this Babel, a government that was independent of business, parties that were independent of everything under the sun, voters that were independent of parties, a press that was independent, a propaganda that was independent, and blocs that knew no rule but their own.

Elect the business man to office, so it is felt, and you will have an important synthesis, an old and tried one, one that worked, business and politics. You will do more. You will import into public life all that wonderful efficiency which we read about in the *American Magazine*, that will to power, that habit of getting things done, that instant capacity for decision which we romantically associate with commercial life. All this is in the minds of those who urge this method of achieving unity.

We have no greater national illusion than the business man illusion. In any other country a business man is just a business man; in America he is a demigod. Golden words, as Mark Twain said, flow out of his mouth. He performs miracles. He has erected a great industry and amassed a large fortune. Therefore he would make a great public official. We never think of him as merely a specialist having a narrow aptitude for heaping up money.

The reasoning about the business man is this. Success, real success, comes to the jack of all trades, a major premise handed down from pioneer days. "A" is a real success, for he has made several millions. Therefore "A" is a jack of all trades. Therefore he would be as great a President as he is a shoe button manufacturer.

We owe the business-man illusion to the pioneers. In a few years they subjected a continent to our uses. They accumulated for themselves wealth such as the world had never seen. The nation does not think of them as the luckiest of a generation facing such virgin resources as existed on no other continent, at a moment when means of transportation such as the world had never seen before, and machinery for manufacture without parallel were in their hands. The marvelous element was not the opportunity but the men.

One day they were telegraphers, day laborers, railroad section hands and the next they were colossal figures of American enterprise. As their like existed nowhere else they became the American type. They established the tradition of American business.

It has been a tradition profitable to keep alive. The men who by luck, by picking other men's wits, or by the possession of a special talent, useful only in a society like our own, grow vastly rich, love to read how wonderful they are. For their delectation a journalism has grown up to celebrate the

epic of their marvelous industry, resourcefulness, efficiency, their god-like insight into the hearts of men; whose praises they pay for liberally in the disposition of advertising. Young men who would be great read this journalism diligently looking for the secret of success. Reading it they resolve not to keep their minds upon five o'clock when the closing whistle blows but to become rich by industry and thrift like its great exemplars; who profit by it not only in having their own praises sung but in getting more work out of their servants.

So much virtue rests upon the business-man illusion that no one would lay an impious finger on it. I merely analyze it to exhibit the contents of our minds when we say "elect a business man President," and to present the picture of a demigod out of the *American Magazine* in the White House, and a new synthesis of business and politics.

Moreover, we let ourselves be misled by the habit of speaking of the "public business" and accepting without examination the analogy which the word suggests. We say to ourselves, "Well, since government is a business, the proper person to be in charge of it is a business man." But it is not business in any exact sense of the word. If the product of the operation were a mere bookkeeping profit or even mere bookkeeping economies then it might properly be called a business. But that which business efficiency in office, if it could

really be obtained, might do well, is the least part of self-government, whose main end must for a long time be the steady building up of the democratic ideal.

But the electing of business men to office does not build up this ideal. On the contrary it is a confession of failure in democracy, an admission that public life in it does not develop men fit for its tasks, that for capacity it is necessary to seek in another world and summon an outsider; establish a sort of receivership in self-government.

And it is a blind sort of receivership. We know little about business men except the noisy disclosures of their press agents. "X" has made a million dollars. If we no longer say, as in the days of Mark Twain, that golden words flow from his mouth, we accept his wealth as proof positive of his extraordinary capacity for affairs. There is no going behind the fact of his vast accumulation, for business is conducted in secret. The law recognizes that it has to be, keeping in confidence facts disclosed through income tax returns.

When we consider a successful business man for office no allowance can be made for the fact that the intelligence responsible for his success may not have been his as head of a successful organization. In no way may it be asked and answered whether all the original force which was in him may not have been spent before he is suggested for office. Senator Knox was an instance

of spent force, his energy and ambition being gone when he entered public life.

Luck may explain a commercial career and you cannot elect luck to office. Special talents which are valuable in making money may be out of place in political life.

Moreover commercial success in America has been easier than anywhere else in the world. Opportunities are numerous with the result that competition has not been keen. Nothing has been so over praised or so blindly praised as business success in this country. We may occasionally elect men in public life to office upon false reputations, as we did Vice-President Coolidge, crediting him with a firmness toward the Boston police strikers which had been shown by a subordinate in his absence. But at least the acts of officials are subject to popular scrutiny. Behind success in business we may not look.

Take the case of a Middle Western corporation. Three quarters of its profits came from a subsidiary. The history of the subsidiary is this: The corporation came into possession of certain mineral lands through the foreclosure of a mortgage. A company developing a product from the mineral failed. The head of the corporation acquiring the property by foreclosure thought this product of little value. A subordinate felt that it could by a change of name and judicious advertising be widely sold. He had great difficulty in persuading

his employer but in the end obtained the money to make his experiment, whose results fully justified his judgment. The public seeking a business man for office would look no further than at the success of the corporation, which would be proof sufficient of the great talents of its head. Electing him they would not obtain for public service the mind which made the money, even if it be agreed that the talent for making money is a talent for public service.

And this case: A great Eastern trust acquired possession of a piece of property in this way: It uses a mineral product not much found in this country. Some Westerners had a deposit. They went to the Eastern trust, which encouraged them and loaned them $10,000 for its development. They then found that the trust was the only market for the mineral and that it had no intention to buy. Ultimately this deposit passed to the trust by foreclosure of the $10,000 mortgage. The trust thus obtaining ownership, began mining and in the first year cleared $500,000 on its $10,000 investment. The transaction in this instance was not the work of a subordinate; it revealed, however, a peculiar talent in the head of the corporation that would not be serviceable in public life.

To get down to names. Many business men entered the service of the government during the war. Almost none of them left it with enhanced reputations. Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip, who served

in the Treasury Department, had little success, so the men who surrounded him felt. I am not able to assess the causes of his failure. Perhaps he had assigned to him an impossible task.

Similarly men who had contact with him while financing the Republican campaign of 1916 were disappointed. After his service at Washington he ceased to be head of a great Wall Street bank. What do these adverse circumstances mean regarding Mr. Vanderlip's fitness to be, let us say, Secretary of the Treasury? Precisely nothing, let us admit. And his success for a number of years in banking, the large fortune he accumulated, by the same reasoning, mean no more.

Mr. Vanderlip is one of our best known business men, yet what the public knows about him is nothing. He was the president of a great bank and amassed wealth. An old financial journalist, he has gift of speech and writing, unusual in the business world. His agreeable personality made him liked by editors. He achieved unusual publicity. Was his reputation solidly based or was it newspaper made? The public does not know, cannot know. I use his case by way of illustration. Perhaps he ought to be President of the United States. But choosing a man for office on the basis of his business success, even so well known a man as Mr. Vanderlip, is plainly enough blind gambling.

We have in office now one of the great business

men of the country. Mr. Andrew W. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, who is posed somewhat uneasily upon what is, many say, the highest pile of wealth any one has ever heaped up, except Mr. John D. Rockefeller. I say "somewhat uneasily" because I have in mind Mr. Mellon emerging from a Congressional hearing at the Capitol, flustered and uncomfortable, turning to a subordinate and asking anxiously, "Well, did I make a good impression?" What could a subordinate reply except, "Yes, Mr. Mellon, you did very well."?

But Mr. Mellon does not make a good impression on the witness stand. If he were unjustly accused of a crime he would hang himself by appearing in his own defense, unless the jury sensed in his stammering hesitancy not guilt but an honest inability to express himself.

Mr. Mellon is the shyest and most awkward man who ever rose to power. He is unhappy before Congressional committees, before reporters in the dreadful conferences which are the outward and visible evidence of our democracy, at Cabinet meetings, where the fluent Mr. Hughes casts him terribly in the shade.

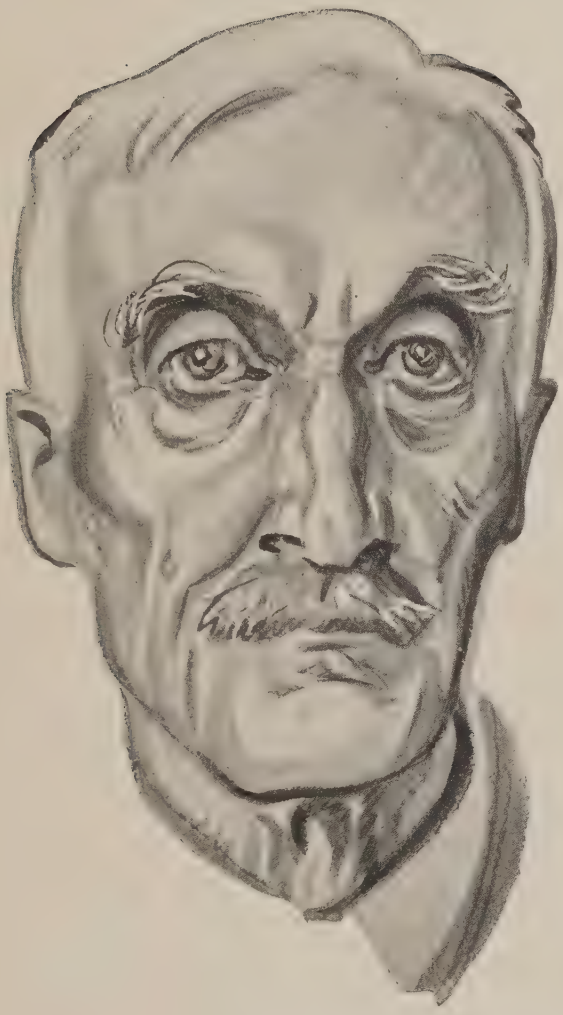
At one such meeting the President dragged him forth from silence by turning to him and asking him, "What has the Sphinx here got to say on the subject." Thus impelled, the Secretary of the Treasury replied, unconsciously in the words of Sir

Roger de Coverley, "Well, Mr. President, I think there is a good deal to be said on both sides."

If we may believe the psychologists, the great object of acquiring wealth and power is the achievement of self-complacency. If it is, Mr. Mellon has somehow missed it. You can not imagine him writing himself down beside the others in the great American copy book and saying seriously to the youth of the land, "Look at me, I worked always fifteen minutes after the whistle blew and behold the result. Follow my footsteps." No golden words issue from his mouth. Some unforgetable personal measure of his own deserts, some standard peculiar to himself, perhaps, refuses to be buried under the vast accumulations.

Were ever great abilities so tongue-tied as this? I ask this question not to answer it. I merely hold Mr. Mellon up as the usually insoluble riddle, the why of great business success. But granting that the real Mr. Mellon is shown in the enormous fortune and not in the timid asking of a subordinate, "Did I make a good impression?" does such shrinking, such ill adaptation, on the stage of public life make a contribution to the unending drama of self-government?

I take it that behind these footlights which we call Washington, just as behind the literal footlights, the actors, if there is to be any lifting of us up, must play a part with which we can identify ourselves in our imagination. He must be articu-



ANDREW W. MELLON, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

late. He must get across. Mr. Harding does it admirably. You watch him and you realize that he is the oldest of stage heroes, Everyman. You say to yourself unconsciously, "Only the accident of seven million majority separates him from me." You are lifted up. Ordinary flesh and blood can do this great thing.

Based on this desire to identify ourselves with greatness is our familiar aphorism, "The office makes the man." All that is necesary is the office to "make" the least of us.

Roosevelt played the part even better than Mr. Harding, "an ordinary man raised to the nth power." He strutted to fill the eye. He was the consummation of articulateness. The point is that self-government must be dramatic or it does not carry along the self-governors.

Of course one must not overlook the fact that "the great silent man" is a consolation to common inarticulateness and ineffectiveness, the general belief that where there is a slow tongue profundity is found being one of those pleasant things which we like to think about ourselves—"we could and we would." But after all there is a sense of pity about our kind attribution of hidden power to dullness. We are half aware that we are compensating.

Anyway, even if the great business man is at home upon the stage, which Mr. Mellon is not, the calling of him to office interrupts the drama of self-

government. We admit our failure and call in the gods from another world. It is as I have said a staged receivership. We can not identify ourselves with the hero. We are poor worms, not millionaires. We might have the seven million majority but we could not also stand upon a pile of seven million gold dollars. Government ceases to be human. It becomes superhuman. And self-government must be human.

Of course, I exaggerate. Mr. Mellon coming from that other world is not wholly without his human relations. I have alluded to his symbolizing the wish-fulfilment of the inarticulate, and the inarticulate are many. He does more. He fits admirably into what Mr. Walter Lippmann has called in his new book one of our popular stereotypes. We demand a conflict between reality and the stage. We like to see the masks pulled off our actors. One of our best received traditions is that a man who has a fight with the politicians has performed a great service. We like to see our strutters strut in a little fear of us.

But Secretary Mellon's defeat of Representative Fordney, Senator Elkins, and Elmer Dover in their efforts to fill his department with politicians was not so much a sign of power as a measure of the difference between Mr. Mellon's world and theirs.

Mr. Mellon comes into the Treasury from his bank. All he knows is banking, not politics. If he went from the Mellon Bank to the National

City Bank of New York he would not discharge all the National City Bank employees and bring in a lot of men who had never seen the inside of a bank before, whom he did not know, who didn't speak the same language that he did. It is only in politics that one finds such perfect faith in man as man.

He goes to one young Democrat in the Department—this actually happened—and he says, "Young man, I like your work. I want you to stay with me." "Ah, but, Mr. Mellon, I can't," plead this Democrat, "You really can't do things that way. It is not done. You will have all the Republican politicians about your ears."

But it was not a sense of power in Mr. Mellon that made him thus defy the conventions. It was merely the instinct of self-protection. He could not live in the atmosphere of politics. He had to do things as he always had done them. The Gods coming down from high Olympus among the sons and daughters of men were probably never as much at ease as the Greeks made them out to be.

With his millions behind him Mr. Mellon was a solid object in his conflict with the politicians. Without them one does not know what would have happened between him and Mr. Fordney, Mr. Elkins, and Mr. Dover.

What is a good Secretary of the Treasury? We have a stereotype about that, too, one slowly and painfully formed. A good Secretary of the Treasury is one who has seen the inside of a bank, who

has read the books on finance and knows the rules. Originally our Secretaries of the Treasury were amateurs, like our generals who beat ploughshares into swords. When one got into trouble, he boarded the Congressional Limited for New York and saw Mr. Morgan. Mr. Morgan came out of his bank holding the safety of the nation in his hands, exhibiting it to reporters who wrote all about it, assuring the public.

At length it was decided to keep the safety of the nation at Washington. And our Secretaries of the Treasury tended to become professional. The young men who tell us whether we have a good Secretary of the Treasury or not are the financial writers of the newspapers. The Secretary acts. The young men look in the books and see that he has conformed to the rules. When he has he leaves nothing to be desired as Secretary.

Mr. Mellon's relation to Alexander Hamilton is the same as Marshal Foch's relation to Napoleon; one knew war from his own head, the other knows it from the teachers. Mr. Mellon's administration is not inspired. In the greatest financial crisis in our history he has no constructive suggestion to make. You would hardly know that Secretary Houston was gone and Mr. Mellon had come. And there is an explanation for this continuity, beside that of the rule books. The hard work of the Department has been done under both administrations by Assistant Secretary S. P. Gilbert, for

Mr. Mellon has the successful man's habit of leaning heavily upon an able and industrious subordinate. Mr. Gilbert is an ambitious young lawyer who has mastered the books and who works 18 hours a day. The voice is the voice of Mellon but the hand is the hand of Gilbert.

I have analyzed Mr. Mellon at Washington although only a small fraction of his career is involved and although he operates in the difficult circumstances of an unknown and unfavorable environment. But he is perceptible in Washington, he does appear before Congressional Committees and at newspaper conferences. You can study the Gilberts who surround him. You can estimate the prepossessions that enter into our judgment of him. You can measure him against the standard of public life.

In Pittsburg he is more remote. He is hedged about with the secrecy of business. He is to be seen only through the golden aura of a great fortune, sitting shy and awkward upon an eminence, the product of forces and personalities which can only be guessed at.

He was the son of a banker and inherited a considerable fortune. He operated in a city which expanded fabulously in the course of his lifetime. If he is shy and unbusiness-worldly, he has a brother who has that force of personality which we usually associate with fitness for life. His bank was the chosen instrument of Henry C. Frick, one of the

pioneer demigods, who could make the business reputations of men who proved adaptable to his uses.

Thus into the result there enters the power of Frick, the thrust upward of Pittsburg, an industrial volcano, the associated personality of the other Mellon. You have to give a name to all this combination of favoring circumstances and favoring personalities and names are usually given arbitrarily. The name given in this case is Andrew W. Mellon. But how much of it is Andrew W. Mellon and how much of it is Pittsburg, how much of it Frick, how much of it brother Mellon, an electorate seeking a business man for office can not stop to inquire and can not learn if it does inquire.

If the people elect a man like Mr. Mellon to office they do not enlist in the public service the combination of persons and forces which is known by his name. Or if he is all that he seems to be, measured by his great fortune, perhaps they get him after he has spent his force or after his head is turned by success, or at any rate they put him into an unfamiliar milieu and subject him to that corrupting temptation, the desire for a second term or for a higher office.

And to go back to what I have said before, they make self-government go into bankruptcy and ask for a receiver.

The great business-man President is just a romantic development of the great business-man illusion.

CHAPTER VII

THE BOTTLE NECK OF THE CABINET, AND WHAT IS IN THE BOTTLE

MR. MELLON'S associates in the Cabinet were most of them chosen on substantially the same principles as he was, namely, that success in business or professional life implies fitness for public life. We have no other standard. The present Cabinet is an "exceptionally good" Cabinet. Many of its members are millionaires.

Some of them owe their place to the rule that those who help elect a President are entitled to the honor, the advertising, or the "vindication," of high public office.

That is to say, the same considerations that rule in the selection of Senators rule in their selection. They were recruited from the class from which Senators are recruited. I can not say the mental level of the Cabinet is above that of the Senate. Take out of the upper house its two strongest members, its two weakest, and half a dozen of the average sort, and you construct a body in every

way equal to the Cabinet of Mr. Harding in intelligence and public morals.

Most of them, never having been members of the upper house, have not suffered from the depreciation in the public eye which attends service in the legislative branch. They come rather from the wonderful business world.

There are, moreover, few of them compared to Senators. Smallness of numbers suggests careful selection, superior qualifications.

And the secrecy of Cabinet meetings makes them impressive. If reporters were present, the public would realize that the Cabinet as a Cabinet was mostly occupied with little things.

The records prove it.

The biweekly meetings of the Cabinet are commonly followed by the announcement: "The Cabinet had a short session today. Nothing of importance was discussed"; or, "Details of administration were discussed." Now, of course, reasons of state may occasionally restrain the disclosure of what actually was the subject before the Cabinet. Yet Mr. Harding's administration has been in office more than a year, and how many important policies has it adopted? How much wisdom has emerged from the biweekly meetings?

Sample announcements of the Cabinet meetings run like this: "The Cabinet listened to the Postmaster General, explaining how much it would facilitate the handling of the mails if people would

distribute the mailing of their letters throughout the day, instead of keeping most of them to mail late in the afternoon when they are leaving their offices. The Postmaster General pointed out that the government departments were offenders in this respect." Useful; but why should the whole nation worry about who advises with the President over the inveterate bad habits of the people as letter writers?

Or this: "The Cabinet spent an hour and a half today discussing what to do with the property left in the government's hands by the war. There are millions of dollars' worth of such property." A mere detail of administration, but it came before the Cabinet as a whole because more than one department was left in control of the property.

Moreover, you may estimate the importance of cabinets from the fact that, after all, every administration takes its color from the President. Mr. Wilson's administration was precisely Mr. Wilson. Mr. Harding's is precisely Mr. Harding.

Listen to the experience of a Cabinet adviser. One of the most important Secretaries was explaining to some friends a critical situation. "But," interjected one of the listeners, "does President Harding understand that?" "The President," replied the Secretary, "never has time really to understand anything."

And remember how Secretary Hughes told the President that the Four Power Pact covered with

its guarantees the home islands of Japan, and how a couple of days later Mr. Harding informed the press that it did not cover the home islands of Japan; when it transpired that the information of Mr. Hughes on this point had effected no lodgement in the President's mind.

The Presidential mind; that is the bottle neck through which everything has to pass.

Suppose we had today the greatest statesman that this country has ever produced as Secretary of State. Let us say Alexander Hamilton, for example. What could Alexander Hamilton do as the head of Mr. Harding's Cabinet? We shall assume that Alexander Hamilton had the mind to grasp the problem of this country's relations to the world and of its interest in the world's recovery from the havoc and the hatreds of the war, and the constructive imagination to reach a solution of it. What could Alexander Hamilton do? His avenue of approach to world problems would be Mr. Harding. All that was in the mind of Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of State, would have to pass through the mind of Warren G. Harding, President, before it would become effective.

The passage through would be blocked by many obstacles, for Mr. Harding has a perfectly conventional mind; that is why he is President. One of the pictures in Mr. Harding's head is the mechanistic, the God's Time picture. "Things left to themselves will somehow come out all right."

Another is the racial inferiority complex. "Man is inadequate to attempt control of his own destiny. There are the forces to be considered." A third is the great business-man illusion. Mr. Morgan going abroad to consider reparations may accomplish the wonders which mere statesmen can not. All these induce avoidance of responsibility, and Mr. Harding has the human liking for avoiding responsibility. Pressed by Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Harding would say: "But I can not move the Senate." Pressed further, he would say: "There is Public Opinion. We shall lose the election if we become involved in European affairs. You and I know those Allied war debts are worthless, but how can we make the people realize that they are worthless?"

Like the rest of us, Mr. Harding perhaps has none of these pictures so firmly in his head as before the war; but the damage to the pictures only makes him more vacillating. I am assuming in all this that Mr. Hamilton has a free mind, which he had, relatively, when he operated a century and a half ago. At that time he had not to think much of Public Opinion or of parties. And the mechanistic theory of Progress, that things come out all right with the least possible human intervention or only the intervention of the business man, had not then assumed its present importance.

"Mind," says a nameless writer in the *London Nation*, "is incorrigibly creative." It has created

so many vast illusions like those above in the last century and a half that like the American spirit in Kipling's poem:

> "Elbowed out by sloven friends,
> It camps, at sufferance, on the stoop."

Where our actual Secretary's mind falls short of our supposititious Secretary's mind is in the valuable quality of common sense. I am even prepared to maintain that as a measure of reality Mr. Hughes's mind is distinctly inferior to Mr. Harding's, which is one reason why he never did become President and Mr. Harding did. I can not better explain what I mean than on the basis of this quotation from a recent book of Mr. Orage, the British critic:

"Common sense is the community of the senses or faculties; in its outcome it is the agreement of their reports. A thing is said to be common sense when it satisfies the heart, the mind, the emotion and all the senses; when, in fact, it satisfies all our various criteria of reality."

Mr. Hughes has only one criterion of reality, his mind, which has been developed at the expense of all his other means of approach to the truth. He lives in a region of facts, principles, and logical deductions. He does not sense anything. And only men who sense reality have common sense. For Mr. Hughes facts are solid; you can make two nice, orderly little piles of them and build a

logical bridge over the interval between them. A true statesman builds a bridge resting on nothing palpable, and nevertheless he crosses over it.

Mr. Hughes's mind operates in a region of perfect demonstration; he even demonstrates things to himself. A true statesman never succeeds in demonstrating anything to himself; he uses demonstration only in dealing with others. Yet he arrives in other than logical ways at a sureness for himself which is never Mr. Hughes's. For the Secretary of State statesmanship is an intellectual exercise, for the true statesman it is the exercise of a dozen other faculties. An extraordinary but limited mind, Mr. Hughes impresses us as the boy lightning calculator does, and leaves us unsatisfied.

Take Mr. Hughes's handling of Mexican relations as an example of what I have called statesmanship made a purely intellectual exercise. The practical result which was to be desired when Mr. Hughes took office was stability and order in Mexico, the safety of American property there, and a restoration of diplomatic intercourse.

Mr. Hughes does not seek to obtain these results. Instead he works out the following problem: $a + b = c$, in which a is the fact that Carranza had issued a decree making possible the confiscation of American property in Mexico, b is the principle of international law that at the basis of relations between peoples must be safety of alien property, and c is a note to Mexico.

Mr. Hughes was excited over the perfection of this intellectual operation. He read his note with all the jubilance of the Greek philosopher who, having discovered an important principle of physics, exclaimed: "Eureka." Mr. Hughes's Eureka is always a piece of paper. He is a lawyer whose triumphs are briefs and contracts.

Now the facts were not merely that Carranza had made an offensive gesture, issuing the famous decree; but that Mexico had not confiscated American property and lived in such fear of her strong neighbor that she was never likely to do so, that the Mexican supreme court had ruled confiscation to be illegal, that the Obregon government was as stable and as good a government as Mexico was likely to have, and that it was to our interest to support it morally rather than encourage further revolution there. They all pointed to recognition.

The validity of the piece of paper that Mr. Hughes demanded of Obregon would rest upon international law. But so did the validity of our right to have our property in Mexico respected. We should not be in any stronger legal position to intervene in Mexico if she violated the contract Mr. Hughes wanted, than if she violated our property rights there unfortified by such a piece of paper. Both rested on one and the same law.

Furthermore, Mexico being weak and sensitive, an arbitrary demand that she "take the pledge," such as Mr. Hughes made, was sure to offend her

pride, and delay the consummation everyone wished—stability across the border and a restoration of good relations. Yet Mr. Hughes was immensely satisfied with his intellectual exercise $a + b = c$, c being not a solution of the Mexican problem, which at this writing is still afar off, but a piece of paper, a note to Mexico. The sheer logical triumph of the deduction of c from a and b is to Mr. Hughes an end in itself.

Now, of course, it is not wholly overdevelopment of mind at the expense of the other criteria of reality which leads Mr. Hughes to vain exercises like $a + b = c$. He has what a recent writer has described as "an inflamed legal sense." He has, moreover, by an association of ideas all his own oddly transferred to law that sacredness with which he was brought up to regard the Bible. "Sanctity of contracts," is his favorite phrase, the word "sanctity" being highly significant. He has, besides, Mr. Harding over him, and the Senate to reckon with. And in the case of Mexico he has as a fellow Cabinet member, Mr. Fall, the picture in whose head is of a "white man" teaching a "greaser" to respect him. He has to think of winning elections, of his own political ambitions. All these inhibitory influences which generally produce negation do not estop Mr. Hughes. His mind is too vigorous for that. It pursues its way energetically to results, such as $a + b = c$.

Now, of course, the handling of Mexican rela-

tions is not Mr. Hughes's major achievement. But even his major achievement, the Washington conference with its resultant nine pieces of paper, was more or less a lawyer's plea in avoidance.

The major problem which confronted Mr. Hughes was this: The Great War had been followed, as Mr. H. G. Wells aptly says, by the Petty Peace. It was threatening, and still threatens, to flame up again. The problem of a real peace confronted Mr. Hughes, because Mr. Wilson had sought to establish one and failed, and had thus set a certain standard of effort for his successor. Moreover, Mr. Hughes had said that every man, woman, and child in the United States was vitally interested in the economic recovery of Europe.

Mr. Hughes had either to face this task or divert the mind of the court to some other issue. He chose to find his $a + b = c$ elsewhere. The problem of establishing peace where there was war was difficult; perhaps it was too hard for any man, but has not humanity—I say humanity because it is Mr. Harding's favorite word—has not humanity the right to ask of its statesmen something more than timidity and avoidance? The problem of establishing peace where there was peace, in the Orient, was relatively easy.

The war had left the great sea powers with excessive navies and insupportable naval budgets. All wanted naval limitation. It was only neces-

sary to propose an agreement for reduction to have it accepted.

Even the dramatic method of making the proposal, with details of the tonnage to be scrapped, was not Mr. Hughes's idea. Let us do the man in the White House justice. He conceived it on the *Mayflower*, read it to Senator James Watson who was with him, and wirelessed it to the State Department.

There was the further problem, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Mr. Hughes wanted it ended. Japan and England wanted it substituted by a compact which should be signed by its two signatories and the United States.

All that Mr. Hughes had to do to establish peace where there was peace was to offer an agreement upon naval armament and accept the Anglo-Japanese plan for a wider pact in the Pacific. The details would involve discussion, but the success of the general program was assured in advance.

The conference was called, hurriedly, because, as Mr. Harding once explained, if he had not hastened someone else would have anticipated him in calling it. This shows how obvious was the expedient. The idea of naval limitation was no more original than the idea of the conference. Mr. Borah had proposed it. Lord Lee had proposed it, in the British Parliament. The idea of the Four Power Pact was made in England—it had long been discussed there—and brought over

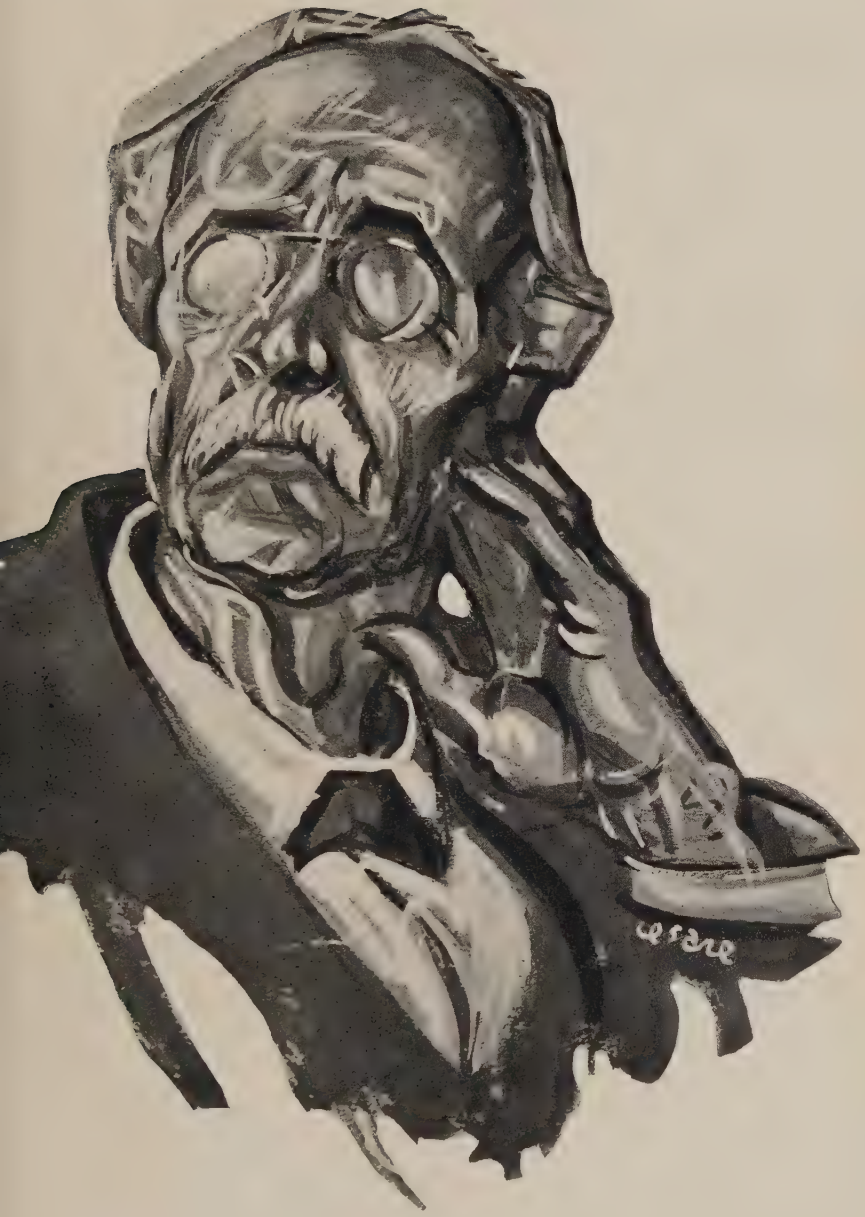
by Mr., now Lord, Balfour. He laid it at Mr. Hughes's feet.

Mr. Balfour sought no triumphs. They should all go to Mr. Hughes. He has the art of inconspicuousness, the result of many generations of fine breeding. As you saw him in the plenary sessions clutching the lapels of his coat with both hands and modestly struggling for utterance after an immense flow of words from our chief delegate, you could not help feeling patriotic pride in the contrast.

Besides, Mr. Balfour was captivated. He became, for the nonce, perfectly American. Mr. H. Wickham Steed said to me, hearing the chief British delegate speak: "It is a new Balfour at this conference." Certainly as you heard the voice, moved and moving, emotional perhaps for the first time in his life, you realized that it was not Mr. Balfour, "proceeding on his faded way" as the *London Nation* expressed it, who was speaking. It was Mr. Balfour as he might be at a great revival meeting, such as Mr. Hughes in his youth must have often attended.

On the Four Power Pact the best comment ever made was Mr. Frank Simonds's, "It was invented to save the British Empire from committing bigamy."

The results of the Washington conference were substantial. They put off war where none was threatening. Perhaps in the longer future they



ARTHUR BALFOUR

will be seen to be no more than a prolongation of the intent of the Versailles treaty, confirming the dichotomy of powers which that instrument created. Germany, Russia, and China were treated as outsiders in both conferences.

But the great $a + b = c$ of last winter left peace where there is war still unwritten. The problem which "humanity" posed to Mr. Hughes is as yet unattempted. It is as exigent as ever. Immensely plausible as he is, events have a way of overtaking him. Remembering what happened on election night in 1916, I think one cannot sum him up better than by saying that he has the habit of always being elected in the early returns. As in the case of the lightning calculator, after you have recovered from your first surprise at his mental exhibition you are inclined to ask, "But what is the good of it all?"

The two most important advisers to the President in the existing Cabinet are Mr. Hughes and Mr. Hoover. The limitations of the Secretary of State are the limitations of a legalistic mind. The limitations of Mr. Hoover are the limitations of a scientific mind. Men, considered politically, do not behave like mathematical factors nor like chemical elements.

Someone asked Mr. Hoover recently why he sent corn to Russia instead of wheat. "Because," replied the Secretary of Commerce without a moment's hesitation, "for one dollar I can buy so

many calories"—carrying it out to the third decimal place—"in corn, and only so many"—again to the third decimal place—"in wheat. I get about twice as many in corn as in wheat."

Mr. Hoover is at his best in feeding a famished population. He then has men where he wants them—I say this without meaning to reflect upon Mr. Hoover's humanitarian impulses; perhaps I should better say he then has men where for the free operation of his scientific mind he requires to have them. For in a famine men become mere chemical retorts. You pour into them a certain number of calories. Oxidization produces a certain energy. And the exact energy necessary to sustain life is calculable.

In a famine men cease to be individuals. They can not say, "I never ate corn. I do not know how to cook corn. I do not like corn." They behave in perfectly calculable ways. So many calories, oxidization; so much energy.

Conceive a society in which results were always calculable: so many men, so much fuel, so much consequent horsepower, and Mr. Hoover would make for it an admirable benevolent dictator; for he is benevolent. If Bolshevism at its most complete exemplification had been a success and become the order of the world, Mr. Hoover might have made a great head of a state; with labor conscripted and food conscripted, all you would have to do would be to apply the food, counted in

calories, to the labor, and production in a readily estimable quantity would ensue. I am not trying to suggest that this represents Mr. Hoover's ideal of society; it surely does not. I am only saying that this is the kind of society in which Mr. Hoover would develop his fullest utility.

Science inevitably reduces man to the calculable automaton, otherwise it can deduce no laws about him;—such as, for example, the legal man, a fiction that haunts Mr. Hughes's brain; the chemical retort man, of Mr. Hoover's mind; the economic man, another convenient fiction; the scientific socialism man, another pure fiction, derived from the economic man and forming the basis for Bolshevism at its fullest development.

Now if Chemistry should somehow acquire eccentricity, so that two elements combined in a retort would sometimes produce one result and sometimes another totally different, the chemist would be no more unsure in his mind than is Mr. Hoover, operating for the first time in a society of free, self-governing men. Or perhaps it would be a better analogy to say that if the chemist when he put an agent into a retort could not be sure what other elements were already in it, and could not tell whether the result would be an explosion or a pleasant and useful recombination, he would be somewhat in the position of Mr. Hoover.

You will observe that I am trying to dissociate the real Hoover from the myth Hoover, always a

difficult process, which may require years for its accomplishment. I do not pretend that this is the final dissociation. All we know with certainty of the real Hoover is that when he has society at the starvation line and can say "so many calories, so much energy," he works with extraordinary sureness.

When he operates in a normal society he takes his chemical agent in hand and consults Mr. Harding, Mr. Daugherty, or Mr. Weeks as to what agents there are in the political retort, and whether the placing of his agent in with them will produce an explosion or a profitable recombination.

So you see the practical utility of his mind is conditioned upon the minds of Mr. Harding, Mr. Weeks, and Mr. Daugherty. It is a fertile mind, which invents, however, only minor chemical reactions, neither he nor Mr. Harding being sure enough about the dirty and incalculable vessel of politics to know when an explosion may result, and neither of them being bold enough to take chances.

Mr. Hughes, Mr. Hoover, and Mr. Daugherty are the only outstanding figures in the Cabinet. The Attorney General lives in an unreal world of his own, which at the moment of this writing threatens to come tumbling down about his head.

The clue to Mr. Daugherty's world is found in a sentence of Thomas Felder's letter apropos of the failure to collect the $25,000 fee for securing the

release of Charles W. Morse from prison, in which he tells how he associated with himself Mr. Daugherty, "who stood as close to the President as any other lawyer or citizen of the United States." "Standing close," men may laugh at the gods, may "take the cash and let the credit go." It is a world of little things without any to-morrow. Long views and large views do not matter. Forces? Principles? Perhaps, but the main thing is all men should "stand close." It is an immensely human world, where men if they are not masters of their own destiny may at least cheat fate for a little brief hour, if only they remain true to each other no matter what befalls.

Mr. Harding, one side of him belongs to that world of Mr. Daugherty's, while another side belongs to that larger political world where morals, wrapped in vague sentimental words, hold sway. It is because he belongs to that world that Mr. Daugherty is Attorney General. Mr. Daugherty "stood close" to Mr. Harding all his life. "Standing close" creates an obligation. Mr. Harding, as President, must in return "stand close" to Mr. Daugherty.

He does so. To the caller who visited him when the Morse-Felder letters were coming out daily, and who was apprehensive of the consequences, the President said, "You don't know Harry Daugherty. He is as clean and honorable a man as there is in this country." In such a world as

this, your friend can do no wrong. Goldstein, who received the $2,500 from Lowden's campaign manager, belongs to it. Therefore, he can do no wrong. Therefore, his name goes from the White House to the Senate for confirmation as Collector of Internal Revenue at St. Louis.

To go back to the time before he became Attorney General, Daugherty practiced law in Columbus, Ohio. His cases came to him, largely as the Morse retainer did, because he "stood close" to somebody, to the President, to Senators, to Governors of Ohio, or Legislatures of Ohio. His was not a highly lucrative practice, for Mr. Daugherty is one of the few relatively poor men in the present Cabinet. You may deduce from this circumstance a conclusion as favorable as that which the President, who knows him so well, does. I am concerned only in presenting the facts. At least Mr. Daugherty did not grow rich out of "standing close."

Nor did he accumulate a reputation. When men "stand close" those who are outside the circle invariably regard them with a certain suspicion. Your professional politician, for that is what Daugherty was, always is an object of doubt. And for this reason he always seeks what is technically known as a "vindication." Conscious of his own rectitude, as he measures it, he may come out of office cleared in the world's eyes, and with a fine title, to boot, ready for life upon a new level.

And this "vindication" sometimes does take place.

I have no doubt that Mr. Daugherty entered office with the most excellent intentions. He had everything to gain personally from "making a record" in the Attorney Generalship, a title and a higher standing at the bar. Moreover, he was the loyal friend of the President and desired the success of the administration.

But it is not so easy. You cannot one moment by "standing close" laugh at the gods and the next range yourself easily and commodiously on the side of the gods. The gods may be unkind even to those who mean to be with them from the outset, establishing their feet firmly upon logic or upon calories; how much more so may they be with those who would suddenly change sides?

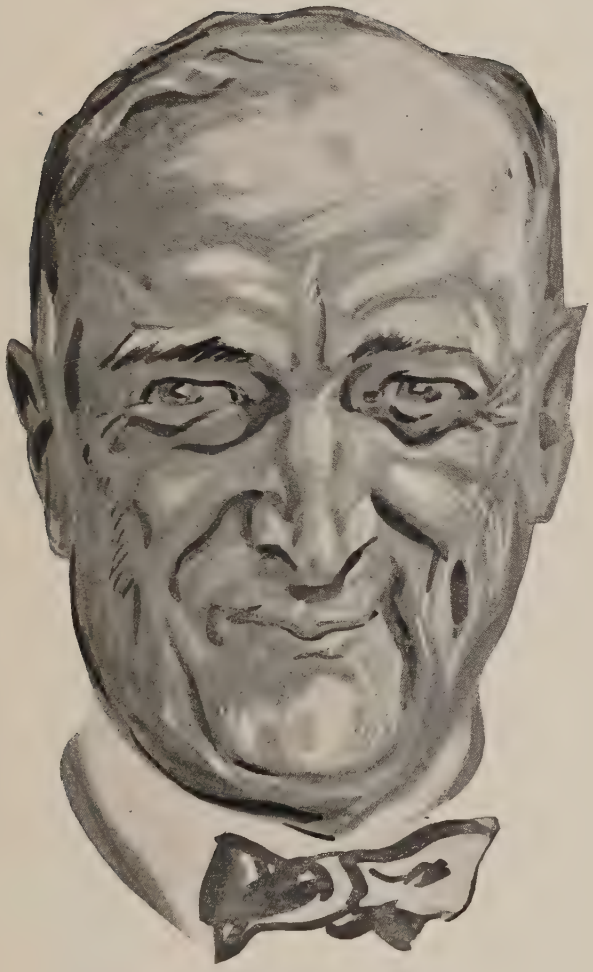
At least it is a matter that admits of no compromise. What is he going to do in office with those who "stood close" to him as he "stood close" to President Taft? All the "close standers" turn up in Washington. For example, Mr. Felder, who "stood close" in the Morse case and who perhaps for that reason appears as counsel in the Bosch-Magneto case, where the prosecution moves slowly, and who moreover permits himself some indiscretions. There is a whole army of "close standers." There are the prosecutions that move slowly. Neither circumstance is necessarily significant. There are always the "close standers."

Prosecutions always move slowly. But the two circumstances together!

I present all this merely to show what kind of adviser the Attorney General is, his limited conception of life on this little world, and life's, perhaps temporary, revenge upon him. No one at this writing can pass judgment, so I give, along with the facts and the appearances, the best testimonial that a man can have, that quoted above from the President.

In physique the Attorney General is burly, thick-necked, his eyes are unsteady, his face alternately jovial and minatory,—I should say he bluffed effectively,—rough in personality, a physical law requiring that bodies easily cemented together, and thus "standing close," should not have too smooth an exterior. His view of the world being highly personal, his instinctive idea of office is that it, too, is personal, something to be used, always within the law, to aid friends and punish enemies. He wrote once to a newspaper, which was opposing his appointment, in substance that he would be Attorney General in spite of it and that he had a long memory.

Secretary of War Weeks is the only other general adviser of Mr. Harding in the Cabinet. He is politically minded. Like Mr. Harding he is half of the persuasion of Mr. Daugherty about organization, and half of the other persuasion about the sway of moral forces. All in all he is



ATTORNEY-GENERAL H. M. DAUGHERTY

nearer akin mentally to the President than any other member of the Cabinet, but with more industry and more capacity for details than his chief. He is of the clean desk tradition; Mr. Harding is not.

Half politician and half business man, he interprets business to the politician, and politics to business. He is a middle grounder. He quit banking satisfied with a moderate fortune, saying, "The easiest thing I ever did was to make money."

His bland voice and mild manner indicate the same moderation in everything that he showed in making money; his narrowing eyes, the caution which led him to quit banking when he went into politics.

Politics intrigues him, but he has not a first-class mind for it, as his experiences in Massachusetts proved.

Frank to the utmost limits his caution will permit, people like him, but not passionately. Men respect his ability, but they do not feel strongly about it. He never becomes the center of controversy, as Daugherty is, as Hoover has been, and as Hughes may at any time be. I have never seen him angry. I have seen him enthusiastic. A Laodicean in short.

Secretary Fall hoped to be one of the chief advisers, but has been disappointed. Mr. Harding had said of him, "His is the best mind in the

Senate," but he has found other minds more to his liking in the Cabinet.

With a long drooping mustache, he looks like a stage sheriff of the Far West in the movies. His voice is always loud and angry. He has the frontiers-man's impatience. From his kind lynch law springs.

He wanted to lynch Mexico. When he entered the Cabinet he said to his Senate friends, "If they don't follow me on Mexico I shall resign." He has been a negative rather than a positive force there regarding Mexico, deviating Mr. Hughes into the ineffective position he occupies.

He has the frontiers-man's impatience of conservation. Probably he is right. His biggest contribution to his country's welfare will be oil land leases, like that of Teapot Dome.

The Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Wallace, is an excellent technical adviser, as unobtrusive as experts usually are.

The Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Denby, with his flabby jowls and large shapeless mouth, has a big heart, and more enthusiasm than he has self-command, judgment, or intelligence. He committed political suicide cheerfully, when the Cannon machine in the House fell into disfavor. He would do anything for a friend, not as Mr. Daugherty would because it pays, but because he is a friend. A cause commands an equal loyalty from him. Just because his head is not as big as his heart he is a minor factor.

BOTTLE NECK OF THE CABINET

Mr. Davis, Secretary of Labor, is a professional glad hand man, appointed because the administration meant to extend nothing to Labor but a glad hand. When a crisis presents itself in industrial relations, Mr. Hoover, who spreads himself over several departments, attends to it. At the conference on unemployment, which was Mr. Hoover's, the best and only example of the unemployed present was the Secretary of Labor.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREATEST COMMON DIVISOR OF MUCH LITTLENESS

We have a form of government suited to effect the will of a simple primitive people, a people with one clear aim. When we are all of one mind the government works. The executive represents the general intention, Congress represents the same intention. The party in power owes its position to the thoroughness with which it expresses the common purpose. Or, if you go back further, the structure of business serves the same social aim.

Now, under such circumstances, it makes little difference where authority resides, whether there is government by business, or government by parties, or executive domination, or whether Congress is the ruling branch. The result is the same, the single purpose of the community finds its just expression.

And so it was in the blessed nineties to which Mr. Harding would have us return. The people were united upon one end, the rapid appropriation of the virgin wealth of this continent and its distribution among the public, and they had no doubt

this was being admirably accomplished by the existing business structure. Parties and governments were subsidiary. The system worked.

In a pioneer society waste is unimportant; it may even be economy. Forests are cut and all but the choicest wood thrown away. They are not replanted. While they are so plentiful it would be a waste of time and effort to use the poor timber or to replace the felled trees.

In a similar society faulty distribution, which is ordinarily a social waste, is unimportant. There is plenty for all. And it may even be a waste of time and effort, checking accomplishment, to seek better adjustments. The object of society is the rapid exploitation of the resources nature has made available. Everyone gains in the process. Justice is a detail, as much a detail as is the inferior timber left to rot.

We no longer have the unity of aim of a pioneer society, yet we have not readjusted our actual government in conformity with the altered social consciousness. Instead we are trying to readjust ourselves to a practice that is outworn. Having ceased to be pioneers, becoming various and healthily divided, instead of making our system express the new variety in our life, and still function, we are trying to force ourselves by heavy penalties and awful bugaboos back into that unity under which our system does work.

And when I say that we have a form of govern-

ment suited only to a pioneer society, though we have ceased to be a pioneer society, let no one think that I would lay a profane hand upon that venerated instrument, the Constitution of the United States. I am thinking only of the Constitution's boasted elasticity. A new stretching is required, to fit a larger and more diversified society than that to which we have hitherto applied it.

For a simple, primitive people, for a pioneer society with but one task to accomplish,—the appropriation and distribution of the undeveloped resources of a continent,—details of distribution being unimportant where natural wealth was so vast, government by business or government by parties as the agents of business served admirably. The essential unity which is not to be found in our government of divided powers existed in the single engrossing aim of the public.

For a temporary end, like the common defense, against an external enemy or against an imagined internal enemy, concentration upon the Executive also serves. The unity of purpose which the nation has is imported into the government through elevating the President into a dominant position. In the one case the government is made to work by putting all branches of it under control of one authority outside itself; in the other, by upsetting the nice balance which the Fathers of the Constitution set up and, under the fiction of party authority, resorting to one man Government.

But what happens when there ceases to be a single aim, when the fruits of the earth are no longer sufficient to go around generously so that no one need question his share, when a conflict of interests arises, when classes begin to emerge, when in short we have the situation which exists in America today?

Let us examine for a moment the Executive as a source of unity in the government of such a divergent society. To make him executive minorities must agree upon him. He must, to use Mr. Harding as an illustration, be satisfactory to the farmers with one point of view and to Wall Street with another, he must be acceptable to the Irish Americans and to the German Americans and to several other varieties of Americans, he must take the fence between those who believe in a League of Nations and those who hate a League of Nations, he must please capital and at the same time not alienate labor.

Mr. Harding gave a glimpse of his difficulties when he said during the campaign, "I could make better speeches than these, but I have to be so careful." The greatest common divisor of all the minorities that go to making a winning national combination must be neutral, he must be colorless, he must not know that his soul is his own. The greatest common divisor of all the elements in the nation's political consciousness today is inevitably a Mr. Harding. We shall probably have

a whole series of Mr. Hardings in the White House.

And when this greatest common divisor of all the classes and all the interests, this neutral, colorless person to whom no one can find any objection, enters the White House does he represent Labor? So little that he will not have a labor man in his Cabinet. Does he represent Capital? By instinct, by party training, by preference, yes, but capital is so divided that it is hard to represent, and the President, like the candidate, "has to be so careful." Does he represent the farmers? He says so, but the farmers choose to be represented elsewhere, on the hill, where they can find agents whose allegiance is not so divided.

And carefulness does not end upon election. Once a candidate always a candidate. The entire first term of a president is his second candidacy. His second term, if he wins one, is the candidacy of his successor, in whose election he is vitally interested; for the continuance of his party in power is the measure of public approval of himself. A president who is the greatest common divisor of groups and interests "must always be so careful" that he can never be a Roosevelt or a Wilson.

Recapitulating the experiences of other peoples with political institutions, we have quickly, since our discovery of one man rule, run upon the period of little kings. The Carolingians have followed close upon the heels of the great Carl. The institu-

tion which in the first decade of the twentieth century was a wonderful example of our capacity to adopt the rigors of a written constitution to our ends, of the practical genius of the American people, in the third decade of the twentieth century is already dead.

The monarch with power, not the mere survival who satisfies the instinct for the picturesque, for the play of the emotions in politics, is suited to an undifferentiated people pursuing a single simple end; one end, one man, many ends, many men is the rule. The greatest common divisor of such masses of men as inhabit this continent, so variously sprung, so variously seeking their place in the sun, is something that has to be so careful as to become a nullity.

There is no reason why our presidents should not become like all single heads of modern civilized peoples, largely ornamental, largely links with the past, symbols to stir our inherited feelings as we watch their gracious progress through the movies. Mr. Harding is headed that way and if that Providence which watches over American destinies vouchsafes him to us for eight years instead of only four, the Presidency under him will make progress toward a place alongside monarchy under King George.

Already, in the habit of blaming every failure and disappointment upon Congress, we see signs of the growth of the happy belief that the King can do

no wrong. When the King does nothing he can do no wrong.

There is no reason why we should not repeat the experiences of peoples who have gone further upon the road of social differentiation than we have and develop like them parliamentary government. By this I do not mean to echo the nonsense that has been written about having the Cabinet officers sit in Congress.

What is more likely to come is a new shift in the balance, a new manifestation of our genius for the practical, which no written constitution can restrain, which will place the initiative in the legislative branch, whereas I have said, under Mr. Harding it is already passing, and which will make Congress rather than the President the dominant factor in our political life.

This process is already taking place.

When President Harding asked the advice of the Senate whether he should revive an old treaty with Germany suspended by the war, pointing proudly to the tenderness he was showing the partner of his political joys, he conceded an authority in the legislative branch which neither the Constitution nor our traditions had placed there. He took a step toward recognizing the prospective dominance of Congress. It was one of many.

It is a long distance, as political institutions are measured, from President Wilson's telling the Senate that it must bow to his will even in dotting

the i's and crossing the t's of the Versailles Treaty, to Mr. Harding's asking the Senate what was its will regarding the old German treaty. Foreign relations are precisely the field where the executive power seems by the Constitution to have been most clearly established, yet it is just here that the legislative branch has made its most remarkable advance toward a dominating position; perhaps because this topic gained a temporary importance from the war and it was naturally in the most significant area that the conflict between the two branches of the government had to break out.

When President Harding introduced the treaties and pacts resulting from the Washington Conference into the Senate, he said that he had been a Senator and knew the Senate views, and that all the agreements he was offering for ratification had been negotiated with scrupulous regard to the Senate's will. And he pleaded with the Senate not to disavow the Executive and impair its standing in the conduct of foreign relations.

No more complete avowal could be made of the dominant position which the Senate has come to occupy in the diplomatic affairs of the country.

In the field where he was supposed legally to have the initiative the President became expressly the agent of the Senate. The Senate laid out the limits of policy and the Executive scrupulously, so he said, observed those limits.

This speech of Mr. Harding's, like his consulting

the Senate in advance upon the reviving of the German treaty, is one of the significant evidences of the shift of power that is taking place, away from the Executive toward the Legislative. It did not attract the attention it deserved because our minds are still full of the past when the Presidency was a great office under Wilson and Roosevelt. We read of Mr. Harding's going to the hill to tell Congress what it must do, and we ignore the fact that he always does so when Congress sends for him, acting as their agent.

The King still makes his speech to Parliament, though the speech is written by the ministers. They are his ministers, though Parliament selects them. The power of the King is a convenient fiction. The power of the President will always remain a convenient fiction, even if it should come to have no more substance than that of the King.

In truth it has been the Senate not the Executive that has been determining our foreign policy in its broader outlines for more than two years. The Secretary of State works out the details. But the Senate says "thus far shalt thou go and no farther." And when the Secretary of State has gone farther, as in the case of the peace treaty with Germany, the Senate has amended his work. So Senator Penrose did not exaggerate, when he said apropos of Mr. Hughes's appointment, "It makes no difference who is Secretary of State, the Senate will make

the foreign policy." The President has only recently declared that it has done so.

So gradual has been the extension of the Senate's prerogative that few realize how far it has gone. So low had the Senate sunk in public estimation during the war that it did not occur to President Wilson that he might not safely ignore it in making peace. He appointed no Senators to the delegation which went to Paris. He did not consult the Senate during the negotiations nor did he ever take pains to keep the Senate informed. He proceeded on the theory that he might sign treaties with perfect confidence that the Senate would accept them unquestioningly. And so impressed was the country at the time with the power of the Presidency that Mr. Wilson's tacit assumption of dictatorial power over Congress was generally taken as a matter of course.

All this was changed under Mr. Wilson's successor. One half of Mr. Harding's delegation to the Washington Conference was made up of Senators. At every step of the negotiation the Senate's susceptibilities were borne in mind. No commitment was entered into which would exceed the limits set by the Senate to the involvement of this country abroad. Almost daily Mr. President consulted with Senators and explained to them what the American Commission was doing. Practically the Executive became the agent of the Senate in foreign relations and in the end he told the

Senate what a good and faithful servant he had been and how scrupulously he had respected its will.

It was only superficially that Secretary Hughes was the outstanding figure of the Conference. The really outstanding figure was the Senate. Mr. Hughes was not free. Mr. Harding was not free. The controlling factor was the Senate. The treaties had to be acceptable to the Senate, whose views were known in advance. No theory of party authority, of executive domination, would save them if they contravened the Senatorial policy disclosed in the Versailles Treaty debate and insisted upon anew to Mr. Hughes's grievous disappointment when the reservation was attached to the separate peace with Germany. When it was realized that Senate opposition to the Four Power Pact had been courted through the inadvertent guaranty of the home islands of Japan, the agreement was hastily modified to meet the Senate's views. President and Secretary of State behaved at this juncture like a couple of clerks caught by their employer in a capital error.

And even Mr. Hughes's prominence was half accidental. The Senate is strong in position but weak in men. Mr. Hughes is vastly Mr. Lodge's superior in mind, in character, and in personality. Suppose the situation reversed, suppose the Senate rich in leadership, suppose it were Mr. Aldrich instead of Mr. Lodge who sat with Mr. Hughes in

the Commission, then the Senate which had made the foreign policy in its broad outlines would itself have filled in the details, and a Senator instead of the Secretary of State would have been the chief figure of the American delegation.

Where did Mr. Harding's plan of settling international affairs by conferences originate? You will find it in a document which Senator Knox brought out to Marion, Ohio, in January, 1921. Reports had come to Washington that Mr. Harding's Association of Nations, which was being discussed with the best minds was only Mr. Wilson's league re-cast. The leaders of the Senate met and agreed on a policy. Mr. Knox took it to the President elect. Instead of a formally organized association there was to be nothing more than international conferences and the appointment of international commissions as the occasion for them arose. Mr. Harding's policy is the Senate's policy.

The Senate's victory has been complete. The United States did not ratify the Versailles Treaty. It did not enter the League of Nations. It did make a separate treaty of peace with Germany. It did not appoint a member of the Reparations Commission—the Senate's reservation to Mr. Hughes's treaty keeping that question in the control of Congress.

Senatorial control of foreign relations seems now to be firmly established. No future president, after Mr. Wilson's experiences with the Versailles

Treaty and Mr. Harding's with the Four Power Pact, will negotiate important foreign engagements without informing himself fully of the Senate's will. And the principle has been established that the Senate shall be directly represented on American delegations to world conferences.

I recall this history of the recent conflict between the Executive and the Senate over foreign relations to show how completely in this important field the theory of presidential dominance has broken down and been replaced by the practice of senatorial dominance. No amendment to the constitution has taken place. The President still acts "with the advice and consent of the Senate." Only now he takes the advice first so as to be sure of the consent afterward, instead of acting first and obtaining the advice and consent afterward.

The Senate has been aided in this conflict with the Executive by the constitutional requirement of a two-thirds majority for the ratification of a treaty. If a majority would suffice, a President, by invoking the claims of party, by organizing public opinion, by judiciously using patronage might put his agreements with foreign nations through. But a two-thirds vote is not to be obtained by these methods; the only practicable means is to accept the Senate's views of foreign policy and conform to it.

As soon as foreign relations became sufficiently important to fight over the conflict was inevitable and the victory of the Senate certain.

The conflict between the two branches of the Government will not stop with this victory of the Senate. It has always been present and probably always will be. The importance of the domestic problems that the war left will cause Congress to insist upon a free hand to make domestic policies. In the past Congress busied itself about little except the distribution of moneys for public buildings and river and harbor improvement. The handling of these funds the legislative branch kept out of executive control.

Now public buildings and improvements have become relatively unimportant. But the deepest economic interests of constituents are involved. Formerly taxes were small and lightly regarded. Today their incidence is the subject of a sharp dispute between classes and industries.

Furthermore the use of government credit for certain economic ends, such as those favored by the farmers, will cause a clash between sections, groups, industries, and strata of society. Policies of large importance will have to be adopted about which there will be a vast difference of opinion. The divergent interests cannot be represented in the White House, for the Presidency embodies the compromise of all the interests. They will have to find their voice in Congress. When they find their voice the great policies will be made. And where the great policies will be made there the power will be.

CHAPTER IX

CONGRESS AT LAST WITH SOMETHING TO DO HAS NO ONE TO DO IT

When Lazarus was raised from the dead it took him a long time to find out that he was again alive. His legs were stiff from being so long extended. His arms were cramped from being decently arranged across his breast. The circulation starting in his members produced disagreeable sensations which recalled his mortal illness and the pains of dissolution. The last thing that this discomfort suggested was life.

Even thus it is with Congress, it has been so long dead that it is hard for it to realize that it has once again come to life. It suffers from various unpleasant sensations in its members, from blocs, from lack of leadership, from indifference to party, from factionalism, from individualism, from incapacity to do business. They are all vaguely reminiscent of the pains of dissolution. On the dissolution theory they are decent and explicable, for death is always decent and explicable.

As signs of life they are scandalous, and every-

body is scandalized over them for fear that a vital Congress will be something new to reckon with.

If Congress does realize that it has waked from the dead, who will be worse scandalized than the senile persons whom the newspapers respectfully call its "leaders"? What more threatening spectacle for second childhood is there than first childhood?

Suppose Congress were again a lusty and vigorous creature with the blood of youth in its veins, how long would Henry Cabot Lodge, aged seventy-two, remain leader of the Senate? Lodge, the irascible old man, with worn nerves, who claps his hands for the Senate pages as if they were not of the same flesh and blood with himself, and who would, if he could follow his instincts, clap his hands in the same way to summon the majority Senators, the recluse who is kept alive by old servants who understand and anticipate every whim, to enjoy greedily the petty distinctions that have come to him late because the Senate itself was more than half dead?

And who would be worse scandalized than the ancient committee chairman, some with one foot in the grave? At one time in the first year of Mr. Harding's administration the important chairmanships in the Senate were disposed thus: Finance, the most powerful committee, Senator Penrose, a dying man; Foreign Relations, Senator Lodge, 72; Interstate Commerce, Senator Cummins, 72, and

broken with illness; Judiciary, Senator Nelson, 79 and living back in the Civil War in which he served as a private; Immigration, Senator Colt, 76.

Suppose Congress should come to life and represent the real interests of the various sections, classes, and, let us say, kinds of property and business in this country—how long would the Senate remain such a pleasant place to die in?

When these old gentlemen made their successful fight upon President Wilson they signed their own death warrants, and began putting an end to the system that made their tenure possible. Only a Congress which had long been a subject of public contempt could have fallen into and could have remained in their hands. Granted that Congress is negligible, it makes no difference who sits in it or how decrepit its leadership.

But shift power once more to the legislative, and the various conflicting interests throughout the country will grasp for the offices now in enfeebled hands. And by taking predominance in foreign relations away from the Executive and transferring it to themselves, the elderly and infirm "leaders," who have been tolerated out of half contempt, have started the avalanche of authority in their direction. It will sweep them off their unsteady feet.

Let us examine what they have done. When they opposed Mr. Wilson on the Versailles Treaty they established the power of the Senate to mark

out broadly the foreign policy of the United States, a dangerous enough beginning for persons who were merely tolerated because Congress was nearly negligible and it was a matter of little difference to the public who its managers were. But when they altered Mr. Harding's treaties they also denied the authority of the Executive as the head of his party to align them in support of his program.

Party authority vested in the Executive thus impaired, it was not long before the representatives of agricultural states also denied it, and began to take their orders from the Farm Bureau Federation instead of from the White House. Then the House leaders in open defiance of the "head of the party" prepared and reported a soldiers' bonus bill which contravened the express purposes of the Executive regarding this legislation. Here we have the organization joining with the farm bloc in declaring the legislature to be its own master.

But on what do the octogenarian feet of Mr. Lodge and Mr. Cummins, and Mr. Colt and Mr. Nelson, and the others, rest except upon party authority? Not upon representing any real or vital principle in the national life. Not upon any force of intelligence or personality.

They move in a region of fictions. They represent the Republican party, when there is no Republican party, no union on principles, no stable body of voters, no discipline, no clear social end to be served.

When votes for legislation must be had, Senator James Watson circulates about among the faithless pleading in the name of party loyalty—as well talk of fealty to Jupiter in the capitol of the Popes!

In extremities the President, as "head of his party," is brought on the scene,—for all the world like the practice of a certain cult which long after its founder was dead used to dress up a lay figure to resemble him and drive it about the marketplace, to reassure the faithful and confirm the influence of the priests. Mr. Harding is alive enough, but the "head of his party" is dead and a mere fiction of priests like "Jim" Watson.

Power has passed or is passing from the Executive and has found no one in Congress to receive it. The arrival of power causes as much consternation on the hill as the outbreak of war does among the incompetent swivel chair bureaucrats of an army in a nation that has been long at peace.

Power is passing to Congress because Congress says who shall pay the taxes and who may use the public credit. Where there was one interest a generation ago, there are many interests today, each trying to place the burden of taxation upon others and reaching for the credit itself. Taxation and credit are the big stakes today and Congress has them in its atrophied grasp.

The question what is the matter with Congress has received more answers than any other question asked about American institutions. For almost a

SENATOR JAMES E. WATSON OF INDIANA

generation the national legislature has been regarded as the one great failure in self government. For years it has been the home of small men concerned with petty things which it approached in a petty spirit, incompetent, wasteful, and hypocritical, a trial to the Executive, almost a plague to the country. It has shared with state legislatures and municipal boards of aldermen the impatience of the people. In spite of searchings of the public conscience it has gone from bad to worse till it is at its lowest point today, in personnel, in organization, in capacity to transact business.

What has brought Congress to this state has been the unimportance of its work, "doing such little things," as Mr. Root said after his six years in the Senate. Natural economy prevents the sending of a man on a boy's errand even if the man would go.

The great power which legislatures have, that over the public purse, has not been of enough importance to make Congress a great legislature. Taxes were light and before the war fell so indirectly that the public gave them little attention. The control of the budget virtually passed out of the hands of Congress, for executive departments habitually exceeded their appropriations and Congress always made up the deficiencies. There was no tax upon incomes. Taxpayers were indifferent. A few hundred millions more or less was of no account.

Dispensations to business in the shape of protective duties upon imports, a form of taxation which once made Congress a dominant factor in national life, had become steadily less important as American industry grew strong enough to hold its own market against competition and to compete itself in other markets. With the subsidence of the tariff as an issue Congress lost its last power to impose taxes in which the country was deeply interested. Where the control of the public purse and taxes are unimportant, legislatures are weak, unless executive authority is vested in a Cabinet formed from among their members.

With the enfeeblement of Congress through the growing unimportance of the taxing power, its great function, came the tendency to magnify the Executive. Power has to go somewhere, and it went down Pennsylvania Avenue. And this movement coincided with the development of centralization. Congress, which was full of the spirit of localism, was not a perfect instrument of centralization. The Executive was.

To elevate the President it was necessary to depress Congress. It became the fashion to speak sneeringly of the Legislative branch, to sympathize with presidents who "had Congress on their hands, to write of "the shame of the Senate," and when any issue existed between the two parts of the government to throw the force of public opinion on the side of the executive. The press printed

endless criticism of the Senate and the House. Theories of government were invented to reduce Congress to a subordinate place.

Meanwhile Congress, having regard for the character of its membership, was agreed that incompetence should suffer no disabilities. All that was required for political preferment within it was political longevity.

The seniority rule, by which committee chairmanships went not to ability but to long service, favored mediocrity and second childhood. Even more, incompetence banded together jealously to protect itself against competence and shunted it into minor assignments. While the public was regarding Congress with contempt Congress was well satisfied to make itself contemptible.

Suppose we had developed a capacity for breeding statesmen in this country, which we have not, would any man of first-class talents seek a public career in such an institution as I have described? In the first place, the people were visiting Congress with indifference, or worse than indifference, and ambition will not serve under indifference. In the next place that great power which makes legislatures dominant, the power to tax and to distribute the fruits of taxation, had become temporarily unimportant; and again, Congress itself was organized for self-protection against brains and character.

Senator Root quit the Senate in disgust. Sena-

tor Kenyon has just followed his example in even deeper disgust. A Tammany Congressman after one term said, "They tie horses to Congressmen in Washington."

Congress is upon the whole a faithful reflection of the American political consciousness. Democracy is a relatively new thing. It has not taken hold of the minds and hearts of men. Shadowy and half-unconscious faiths dispute its place. De Gourmont writing of the persistence of Paganism in Catholicism, says that no religion ever dies but lives on in its successor. So no government ever dies but lives on in its successor. Why take the trouble to govern yourselves when your vital interests are so well directed by the higher governments, of Progress, of economic Forces, of heroes and captains of industry who ruled by a sort of divine right? The less you try to muddle through by means of poor human instruments in this well-ordered world the better.

For the limited tasks of self-government, why should special talents be required? We are still near enough the pioneer age to adhere to pioneer conceptions. Roosevelt, unfortunately, is the national ideal.

We look hopefully for great amateurs like him among insurance agents, building contractors, lawyers, country editors, bankers, retiring, with modest fortunes made, into public life. We put the jack of all trades everywhere. Into the Presi-

dency—and I don't know why we should not in that office, for it is a waste of material and a misdirection of effort in self-government to throw away a first-class public man on a four-year job. Into the Senate and the House, into the Cabinet, where a lawyer without previous experience of international affairs conducts our foreign relations in the most difficult period of the world's history, matching the power of his country against the wits of other countries' practiced representatives, and thus obtaining a certain forbearance of their extreme skill.

Into the diplomatic posts, where an editor, Colonel Harvey, noted only for his audacity, holds the most important ambassadorship. Those who have seen the Colonel at meetings of the Supreme Council tell the amazing story that he was a silent and uneasy figure in the conferences of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Briand, perhaps because he is only an observer, perhaps also because he was in the company of practiced statesmen and diplomats.

However, our system has its compensations. The picture of the robustious Colonel uneasy in Zion is one of them.

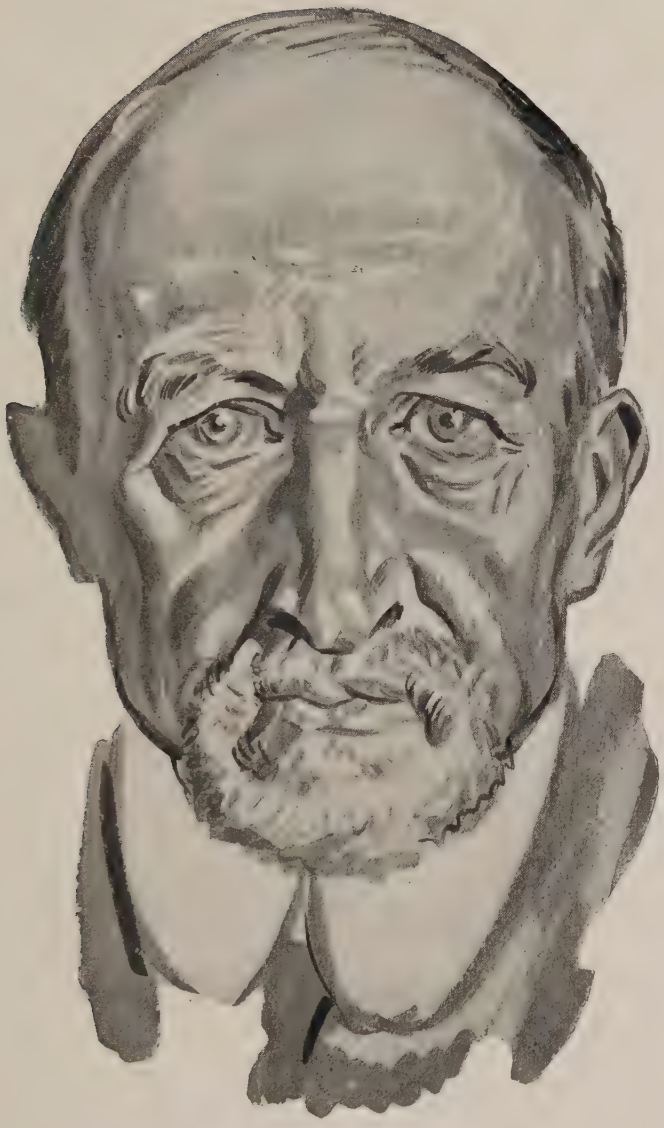
In another great diplomatic post is Mr. Richard Washburn Child, a quantity producer of fiction, or sort of literary Henry Ford. In another, Paris, the second most important in the world, Mr. Myron Herrick, a retired business man. Senator Foraker said of him, at a critical moment of his

public career, "*De mortuis nil.*" "Don't you wish to finish that quotation, 'nisi bonum,'" asked the reporter who was seeking a statement. "No," said the Senator sharply; "De mortuis nil." Of the ambassador to France nil, except that he comes from Ohio.

But when we, given all these causes for the weakness of Congress, the frail hold which the idea of self-government has upon the popular mind, the unimportance of the taxing power, the tendency to concentrate on the executive at the expense of the legislative, the obstacles to ability which mediocrity has erected in Congress, we have not explained the present extraordinary confusion and demoralization in the legislative branch. Most of these causes have been operating for some time, yet Congress has been able to function. Only since Mr. Harding became President has the breakdown of Congress been marked.

If you ask observers in Washington why the last Congress failed more completely than any of its predecessors, with one voice they reply: "Lack of leadership." Everybody cackles of leadership as if lack of leadership were a cause and not a symptom. What is it that makes a leader and followers unless it is a common purpose?

The weakness of Mr. Harding, Mr. Lodge, Speaker Gillett, Mr. Mondell lies partly in themselves, but it is made more apparent by the difficulties that confront them. It traces back to the



REPRESENTATIVE FREDERICK H. GILLETT OF MASSACHUSETTS

uncertainties in the national mind. Who could lead representatives of taxpayers staggering under the costs of the war and representatives of soldiers striving to lay an added burden on the taxpayers? Who could lead representatives of farmers who demand that a large share of the credit available in this country be mobilized by the government for the subvention of agriculture and representatives of commerce and manufacture who wish to keep the government from competing with them for the stock of credit? Or labor which insists that the way to improve business is by stimulating demand at home through liberal wages, increasing consumption; and the other classes which insist that the way to restore business is by making increased consumption possible to them through lower prices only to be accomplished through lower wages? The conflict runs across party lines. The old rallying cries fall on deaf ears.

The Republican party was based on the common belief that government favors delivered at the top percolated down, by a kind of gravity that operated with rough justice, to all levels of society, like water from a reservoir on a hill reaching all the homes of a city. When you called for loyalty to that you called for loyalty to everybody's stomach, expressed in the half-forgotten phrase: "The full dinner pail."

Now, the various elements of society are doubtful of what may reach them by the force of gravity

from the top. Each insists that government favor shall enter at its level and be diffused from that center. Would you make the nation happy and rich, give the soldiers a five-billion-dollar bonus and start them buying? Give the farmers a several-billion-dollar guarantee of their staples and start prosperity on the farm. Give labor high wages and start prosperity there by stimulating consumption. Give the consumer lower prices by cutting wages and start prosperity there. Shift the burden of taxation somewhat from wealth and start prosperity once more in the good old way by favors at the top.

One might compare the breakup that has occurred in this country to the breakup that took place in Russia after the first revolution, the peaceful and ineffective revolution of 1905. All parties in Russia united against absolutism. A measure of representative government being established and the main object of the revolution being achieved, all parties fell to quarrelling among themselves as to which should profit most by the new institutions.

Under Mr. Roosevelt and his successors a mild revolution was accomplished. People turned against economic absolutism. They had begun to question the unregulated descent of favors from the top. They doubted the force of gravity that used to fill dinner pails. They demanded some representation in the process of filling dinner pails. They set up a government at Washington to control credit and transportation.

And now they have fallen apart over who shall pay the taxes, who shall have use of the credit, who shall profit by lowered freight rates, rebates in principle, special favors in transportation, under a new name.

When men today deplore the lack of leadership they are comparing Mr. Harding with Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Lodge and Mr. Mondell with Senator Hanna and Senator Aldrich. Today's chiefs of state are of smaller stature. Mr. Harding has been a drifter all his life; he has not the native force of Mr. Roosevelt, the sheer vitality which gloried in overcoming obstacles. He has not the will of Mr. Wilson. The petulant Lodge is not the same order of being as the brutal, thick-necked Hanna, or the more finished but still robust Aldrich.

But beyond this personal superiority which the leaders of the past had, they enjoyed the advantage of standing upon sure ground. Mr. Hanna belonged to that fortunate generation which never doubted, whether it was in religion or morals or politics. He may not have put it so to himself, but behind everything that he did lay the tacit assumption that the business system was divinely ordained. The hand of Providence was conspicuous everywhere in America's rise, but nowhere more than in the rapid turning, unprecedented in the world's history, of minerals and forests into a civilization.

In times of daily miracles it is easy to believe. Mr. Hanna believed, the public believed, Congress believed. Mr. Hanna spoke for this divinely ordained system which was developing an undeveloped continent as one had never been in the memory of man, making us all richer, with a certain rough justice, according to our deserts.

He himself was a pioneer. He himself had created wealth. He knew the creators of wealth. He delivered the commandments handed down to him on the mountain. With God so much on his side a much lesser man than Hanna would have been a great leader. God isn't on the side of Mr. Lodge. That is the difference.

Mr. Aldrich represented a less pure faith. What had been a primitive religion had become an established church. He had behind him a power of organization in business and Congress that Hanna had not. The public may have been less faithful; still the religion he represented was the official religion.

Like Hanna, he was rich and a creator of wealth; in addition he was connected by marriage with the richest family in the United States. He was the spokesman of business, and even if faith was decaying no one seriously questioned the sacred character of business as the instrument of Providence for making America great, rich, and free.

The chief aim was the creation of wealth. No one could doubt that the business organization

was accomplishing it with unparalleled success. Perhaps the heads of the business organization kept a little too much of the newly created wealth to themselves, but at least everyone shared in it and it was wise to let well enough alone. Where there is such substantial unity as existed at that time, no great personal qualities are required for leadership.

And Mr. Aldrich was not endowed with great personal qualities. He has been gone from Washington only a dozen years, and yet no tradition of him survives except that he managed the Senate machine efficiently. In type he was the business executive. He represented more fully than anyone else in the Senate the one great interest of the country. He stood for a reality, and it gave him tremendous power.

His mind was one of ordinary range. He traded in tariff schedules and erected majorities upon the dispensing of favors. He bestowed public buildings and river improvements in return for votes. Leaders have not now these things to give or have them in insufficient quantities and on too unimportant a scale.

No great piece of constructive legislation serves to recall him. Primarily a man of business, he nevertheless attached his name to the grotesque Aldrich-Vreeland currency act. The work of the monetary commission of which he was the head, and which led to the present Federal Reserve Law, was the work of college professors and economists.

Natually a better leader than Mr. Lodge because he met men more easily upon a common ground and had more vitality than the Massachusetts Senator has, he was no better leader than any one of half a dozen present Senators would be if the aim of business were accepted today by the country as the great social aim, as it was in his day, and if any one of the six now spoke for business in the Senate as in his time he did.

Give Mr. Brandegee or Mr. Lenroot or Mr. Wadsworth a people accepting that distribution which worked out from extending to the heads of the business organization every possible favor and immunity, as the distribution best serving the interests of all, and add unto him plenty of public buildings and river improvements, and he could lead as well as Mr. Aldrich.

CHAPTER X

INTERLUDE. INTRODUCING A FEW MEMBERS OF THE UPPER HOUSE BOOBOISIE AND SOME OTHERS

THERE is a saying that in American families there is only three or four generations from riches to shirt sleeves. Mr. Hanna is the first generation, Mr. Aldrich is the second generation. In Mr. Penrose and Mr. Lodge you reach what is a common phase of American family history, the eccentric generation. And in Senator Jim Watson and Senator Charles Curtis, who are just coming on the scene as "leaders," you reach once more political shirt sleeves.

The American family dissipating its patrimony, produces invariably the son who is half contemptuous of the old house that founded his fortunes, who is half highbrow, who perhaps writes books as well as keeping them, or it may be bolts to the other side altogether.

So the Hanna-Aldrich stock produced Henry Cabot Lodge, a sort of political James Hazen Hyde, who stayed at home and satisfied his longing for abroad by serving on the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee. But perhaps it would be fairer to Mr. Lodge to say of him what a witty friend of mine did, "Lodge is what Henry James would have been if Henry James had remained in America and gone into politics." Or he is what Henry Adams might have been if Henry Adams had been less honest in his contempt for democracy.

The last leaf of that New England tree whose fruit was an expatriate literature and expatriate lives, the limit of Mr. Lodge's expatriation was an interest in foreign affairs when redder-blooded Americans were happily ignorant of them. If business had been choosing spokesmen at Washington it would no more have picked out Mr. Lodge than it would have picked out James Hazen Hyde or Henry James. Mr. Lodge's leadership was a sign of decay.

But some will say business at this time had Senator Penrose as its spokesman. I doubt it. Senator Penrose was that other son of the family in whose blood runs all the ancestral energies without the ancestral restraint.

By the time he achieved prominence business in politics was no longer quite respectable. People said, creating the Penrose legend, "Why, Penrose would stop at nothing. He'd even represent the selfish interests here in Washington." Therefore it was considered that he must represent them. And he did to an extent, speaking for Henry C. Frick and some others of Pennsylvania, but he was

in no adequate sense the successor of Aldrich and Hanna.

Had business chosen a spokesman at Washington, he must have been respectable. Hanna was that most respectable of Americans, the highly successful man who has played for and won a great fortune. Aldrich was that equally respectable American, the conservative manager of the established corporation.

There is a story that when Penrose became boss of Pennsylvania the Republican politicians of the State were anxious about the effect his personal reputation would have upon the voters. Finally they went to him, as the elders sometimes go to the young parson, and said, "The organization thinks the people would like it better if you were married." "All right, boys, if you think so," Penrose replied; "let the organization pick the gal." The organization recoiled from this cynicism. But business is harder. Business, if it had really identified itself with Penrose, would have "picked the gal."

No better evidence of the tenuity of his connection with business is required than his outbreak in 1920, "I won't have the international bankers write the platform and nominate the candidate at Chicago."

Mr. Penrose enjoyed a "*succés de scandale.*" He was what the hypocrites in Washington secretly desired to be but lacked the courage to be. He

lived up to the aristocratic tradition, at its worst; which everyone admires, especially at its worst. He did on a grand scale what anyone else would have been damned for doing on a lesser scale and was loved for being so splendidly shocking.

He was the village sport, with the best blood of the village in his veins, and was the village delight, the man about whom all the best stories were whispered. He had the clear mind which comes from scorn of pretense. But all this is not greatness, nor is it leadership. The Republicans in the Senate before being led by Mr. Penrose would have insisted on "picking the gal." They like to see framed marriage certificates in the party household.

The patrimony is gone and we reach shirt sleeves in Senator Charles Curtis and Senator James Watson, one of whom will succeed Mr. Lodge when he dies, retires, or is retired, and the other of whom will succeed Mr. Cummins as president pro tem when he similarly disposes of himself or is disposed of.

Neither of them has the stature or solidity of Hanna or Aldrich, and they will not have supporting them unity in party or in national sentiment. Neither of them has the romantic quality of Mr. Penrose or Mr. Lodge. Neither of them will ever be a leader in any real sense of the word. Neither of them will have anything to lead.

As frequently happens when you reach shirt

sleeves by the downward route, you find the accumulative instinct reasserting itself on a petty scale. Look at the rather shabby clothes that Senator Curtis wears, in spite of his considerable wealth, and you are sure that you have to do with a hoarder. And that is what he is; a hoarder of political minutiæ.

Current report is that he is the best poker player in either house of Congress. You can imagine him sitting across the table watching the faces of his antagonists with a cold eye, which no tremor of a muscle, no faint coming or going of color, no betraying weakness escapes.

That is his forte in politics, knowing all the little things about men which reveal their purposes or operate in unexpected ways as hidden motives.

He has a perfect card catalogue of nearly all the voters of Kansas. It is kept up to date. It reports not merely names and addresses but personal details, the voter's point of view, what interests him, what influences may be brought to bear on him. Curtis is a hoarder, with an amazing capacity for heaping up that sort of information.

His mind is a card catalogue of the Senate, vastly more detailed than the card catalogue of Kansas. He watches the Senate as he watches the faces of his antagonist in a poker game. He knows the little unconsidered trifles which make men vote this way and that. And he is so objective about it all that he rarely deceives himself. If into this

concern with the small motives which move men there crept a certain contempt of humanity he might mislead himself; he might be hateful, too; but his objectivity saves him; he is as objective as a card catalogue and no more hateful.

But you see how far short all this falls from leadership, or statesmanship, or greatness of any description. Usefulness is there certainly; card catalogues are above all useful, especially when there is variety and diversity to deal with, as there is coming to be in a Senate ruled by blocs and frequented by undisciplined individualism.

If Curtis kept a journal he would hand down to posterity a most perfect picture of men and motives in Washington,—if, again, posterity should be interested in the fleeting and inconsiderable figures who fill the national capital "in this wicked and adulterous generation seeking for a sign"—I am quoting the Bible trained Secretary of State in one of his petulant moments.

If he had the malice of Saint Simon, the journal would be diverting, but he is without malice. He has no cynical conception of men's weakness and smallness as something to play upon. He accepts Senators as they are, sympathetically. What makes them vote this way and that is the major consideration of politics. His records of the Kansas electorate are more important to him than principles, policies, or morals. The efficient election district Captain of the Senate, that is Curtis.

A more likely successor to Lodge is "Jim" Watson of Indiana. I attended a theatrical performance in Washington recently. Nearby sat the Indiana Senator. His neighbor, whom I did not recognize, doubtless some politician from Indiana, sat with his arm about Watson's neck, before the curtain rose, pouring confidences into Watson's ear.

Watson is given to public embraces. His arm falls naturally about an interlocutor's shoulders or, and this is important as showing that Jim is not merely patronizing, descending affectionately from the great heights of the Senatorship, Jim himself, as at the theatre, is the object of the embrace. But perhaps that is finer condescension.

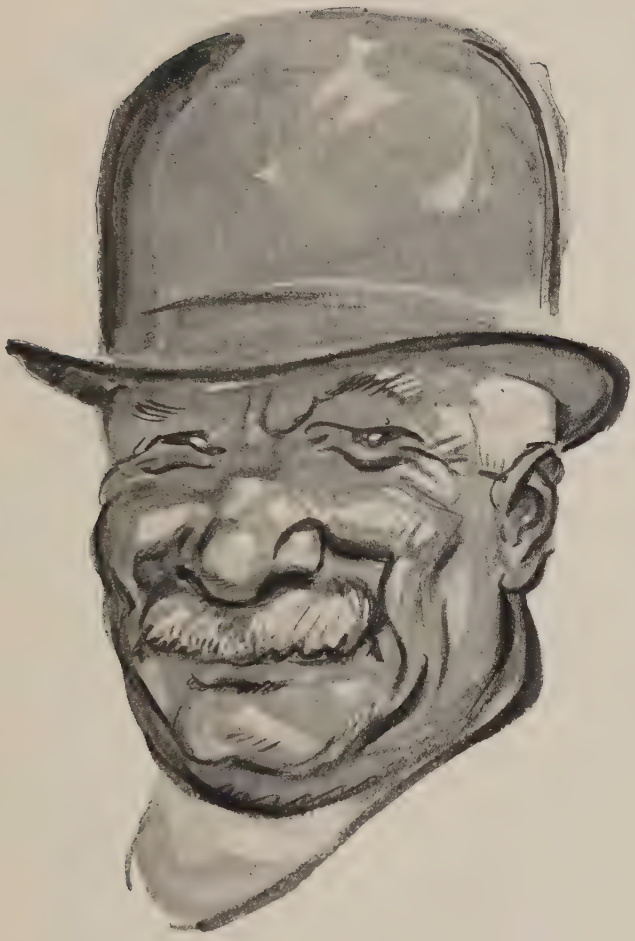
If the characteristic gesture of Lodge is the imperious clapping of his hands for the Senate pages and the revealing trait of Curtis is extraordinary intuition about the cards in other hands around the lamp-lit table, the soul of Watson is in the embrace. His voice is a caress. He kisses things through. He never errs in personal relations, if you like to be embraced—and most men do, by greatness.

In one of his less successful moments he represented, at Washington the National Manufacturers' Association, at that time a rather shady organization of lesser business men. If he had not been the orator that he is he would have been with that circumambulatory arm of his, an inevitable lobbyist.

For Watson is an orator, of the old school, the Harding school. They employ the same loose style of speech, flabby as unused muscles, words that come into your head because you have often heard them on the stump and in the Senate, and read them in country editorials, words that have long lost their precise meaning but evoke the old pictures in the minds of an emotional and unthinking electorate. At this art of emitting a long rumble of speech which is not addressed to the mind Watson has no equal.

It is an American art and puzzling to foreigners. Vice-Admiral Kato, not the head of the Japanese delegation but the second Kato, had enough English to remark it. "Your President," he said, "is a charming man, but why does he put such funny things in his speeches?"

In the mere mastery of this kind of English Mr. Harding may equal Watson, but as an orator the Indianian has what the President never had; the unctious quality in him which makes him embrace readily lets him pour out his soul freely. He has thunders in his voice, he tosses his head with its fuzzy hair magnificently, he has gusto. He has imagination. He is a big, lovable if not wholly admirable, boy playing at oratory, playing at statesmanship, playing above all at politics. Nothing is very real to him, not even money; he put all he had into an irrigation project and left it there. Just now he irrigates with the tears in his



SENATOR JOSEPH S. FRELINGHUYSEN OF NEW JERSEY

voice the arid places in the Republican party where loyalty should grow.

I present these characterizations of Senate leaders, past, present, and future, to indicate through them what the Senate itself is, and to suggest what conditions have given quite ordinary men power and how feeble leadership has become, with the country no longer agreed how best to promote the general good, and with Congress as it has been in recent years a relatively unimportant factor in the national government.

Senator Platt used to say of an habitual candidate for nomination to the governorship of New York, Timothy L. Woodruff, "Well, it may taper down to Tim." We have "tapered down to Tim," —or rather to "Jim"—in the Senate because as a people we have been indifferent and unsure, and because there has been little use for anything but "Tims" or "Jims" in Washington. Nature seems to abhor a waste in government.

Those who ascribe all the troubles in Congress to lack of leadership, and go no further, blame the poverty of our legislative life upon the popular election of Senators and upon the choice of candidates at direct primaries. But the decay began before the system changed. We resorted to new methods of nomination and election because the old methods were giving us Lorimers and Addickses. Probably we gained nothing, but we lost little.

Big business, so long as the taxing power,

through the imposition of the tariff, was important to it, and so long as it was accepted as the one vital interest of the country, saw to it that it was effectively represented in Congress. It was then somebody's job to see that at least some solid men went to Washington. It has of late been nobody's job. There has been no real competition for seats in the national legislature.

The Senate has tempted small business men who can not arise to the level of national attention through their control of industry, and small lawyers similarly restricted in their efforts for publicity. It is an easily attained national stage.

It appeals to that snobbish instinct—of wives sometimes—which seeks social preferment not to be obtained in small home towns, or denied where family histories are too well known.

It allures the politician, bringing opportunity to play the favorite game of dispensing patronage and delivering votes, with the added pomp of a title.

It is the escape of the aristocrat, whose traditions leave him the choice between idleness and what is called "public service."

It is the escape of the successful man who has found his success empty and tries to satisfy the unsatisfied cravings of his nature. Such men "retire" into it, as it was reported to President Harding's indignation that one of the Chicago banker candidates for the Secretaryship of the Treasury wished to retire into the Cabinet. Some

enter it for one of these motives, more from a combination of them, but, generally, it is the promised land of the bored, some of whom find it only a mirage.

A typical Senator is Mr. Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, one of the smaller business men being drawn into public life. Son of a country minister, he started as an insurance agent. Nature equipped him with unusual energy and aggressiveness and those two qualities brought success in writing insurance. Nothing in his early training inhibited his robust temperament. Ruddy and vigorous, he is not sicklied o'er with any pale cast whatever. Plainly he has a zest for life, that easily accessible American life where good mixers abound.

Not a highbrow, he yet recognizes that literature has its place, on all four walls of a large room, and bought in sets.

Having the American horror of loneliness, whether social or moral, you find him always going along with his party. When his set divides he balances between the two factions as long as possible and elects to go with the more numerous. Simple, likable, honest, safe so long as majorities are safe, and that is the theory we are working on, he is the average man in everything but his aggressiveness and energy.

No, he also rises above the average in possessing such a name as Frelinghuysen. You enter his library and you see a banner of the campaign of

Clay and Frelinghuysen. He will recite to you campaign songs of those unsuccessful candidates for President and Vice-President. Another Frelinghuysen was a Cabinet member. Another Frelinghuysen, of the wealthier branch of the family, has an assured social position.

None of these famous Frelinghuysens is an ancestor. Each of them is a challenge. If he could have found an ancestor! If an insurance company were a high place from which to survey the world at one's feet! But, no! Ancestors, power, publicity, social prestige, all lie beyond the reach of small business success.

In the Senate men, important men, come to you for favors; it is so much better than going to them to write policies. From the Senatorship you condescend; there really is a world to which a Senator can condescend. Washington is a social melting pot. No one asks whether you are one of the Blanks. You are Senator Blank and that is enough. And if you are so fortunate, by your very averageness, to attach yourself to the average man whose fortune makes him President, and you become one of the Harding Senators, one of the intimates, you are lifted up: like Bottom, you are translated. You are the familiar of greatness.

As a legislator you deal with policies, international and domestic, in the realm of ideas—as when you sit in your library, four square with all the wisdom of the ages.

If you have enough of the boy about you, like Frelinghuysen, you enjoy all this hugely. You have projected your ego beyond the limits of the insurance business. You look among the branches of the Frelinghuysen family tree without losing countenance. Who knows that there won't be another "and Frelinghuysen" ticket, this time a successful one?

Not every senator has escaped so nearly from the failures which attend success as has Frelinghuysen. Nor is his escape complete. A sense of unreality haunts him. Aggressiveness in his case covers it, as it so often does a feeling of weakness. After he has blustered through some utterance, he will buttonhole you and ask, "Did I make a damn fool of myself? Now, the point I was trying to make was, etc. Did I get it clear? Or did I seem like a damn fool?"

Less agile minded than Senator Edge, he watches the motions of his New Jersey colleague as a fascinated bird watches those of a snake or a cat. Intellectually he is not at ease, even in the Senate.

Another of the Harding set is Harry New of Indiana, one of the "Wa'al naow" school of statesmen, in dress and speech the perfect county chairman of the stage. The broad-brimmed black felt hat, winter and summer, has withstood all the insidious attacks of fashion. The nasal voice has equally resisted all the temptations to conformity with the softer tones which are now everywhere

heard. In politics one has to be regular, and New has the impulse to individuality, which with Borah and LaFollette manifests itself in political isolation. With New it manifests itself in hat and speech. New thus remains a person, not merely a clothes-horse which is recorded "aye" when Mr. Lodge votes "aye" and "no" when Mr. Lodge votes "no." But this is hardly fair. Mr. New has been irregular in other ways. He has not made money; he has lost it, a fortune in a stone quarry. He is indifferent to it. This marks him as a person. He would rather whip a stream for trout than go after dollars with a landing net.

Whipping a stream for trout is the clue to Harry New. If you are a fisherman you impute all sorts of wiles to the fish. You match your wits against the sharp wits under the water, and your ego is fortified when, the day being dark and your hand being cunning, you land a mess from the stream. The world is a trout stream to New. The hat and the nasal accent are the good old flies that Isaak Walton recommended.

There is the type of mind which sees craft where others see simplicity. We associate shrewdness with the kind of hat New wears and the kind of voice he has preserved against the seductions of politeness. It is one of our rural traditions. Suppose shrewdness that asks no more than conversation and a small mess of fish. It is delightful. As we listen to it arriving after the

most penetrating exposition at the same conclusions which we have reached directly and stupidly, we are flattered. We realize that we, too, are shrewd, unconsciously so, as, wasn't it Molière's bourgeois gentleman, who learned that he was unconsciously a gentleman, since he had been doing all his life some of the things that gentlemen did?

A playboy of the western plains, New would be happier if his colleague, Jim Watson, did not also take himself seriously as a politician. "Jim," says New, "is an orator, a great orator, but he ought to let politics alone; as a politician he is, like all orators a child."

New is no orator. A fair division would be for Watson to be the orator and New the politician. But no one is ready to admit that he is no politician. For New politics is craft; for Watson it is embraces. At a dinner in Indiana, New contrived to have his rival for the senatorship, Beveridge, and the politically outlawed Mayor of Indianapolis, Lew Shank, not invited. Watson would have led them both in with an arm around the neck of each. That individualism which makes New preserve the hat and the accent makes him punish foes, or is it that the sense of being "close to Harding" robs him of discretion?

In the board of aldermen of any large city you will find a dozen Calders, local builders or contractors, good fellows who have the gift of knowing

everyone in their districts, who by doing little favors here and there get themselves elected to the municipal legislature; they see that every constituent gets his street sign and sidewalk encumbrance permits, interview the police in their behalf when necessary, and the bright young men who compose the traditional humor of the daily press refer to them gaily as "statesmen."

The art of being a Senator like Calder is the art of never saying "no." He is worth mentioning because he has the bare essentials of senatorship, the habit of answering all letters that come to him, the practice of introducing by request all bills that anyone asks to have introduced, industry in seeking all jobs and favors that anyone comes to him desiring.

He "goes to the mat" for everybody and everything. He shakes everybody's hand. He is a good news source to representatives of the local press and is paid for his services in publicity. New York is populous and sent many soldiers to the late war. Nevertheless, the mother or father of a soldier from that state who did not receive a personal letter from Calder must have eluded the post office.

He votes enthusiastically for everything that everybody is for. He is unhappy when he has to take sides on sharply debated issues. Morality is a question of majorities. He finds safety in numbers.

SENATOR HARRY S. NEW OF INDIANA

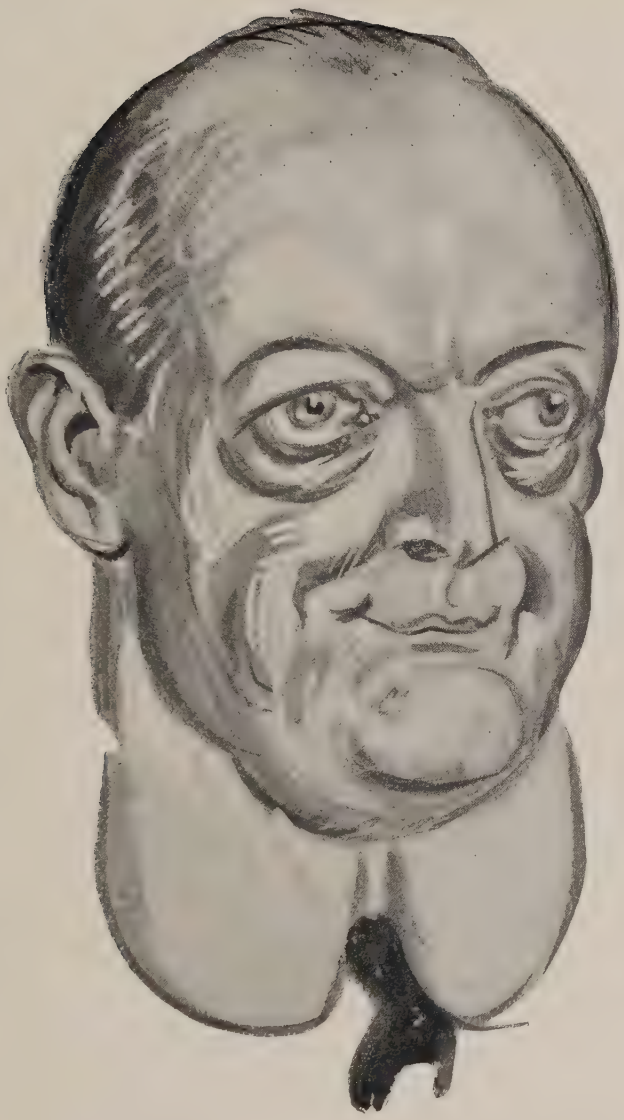
Nature was not kind to Calder; it left him with no power to throw a bluff. He is plainly what he is. He has neither words nor manner. His colleagues look down on him a little. But most of them are after all only Calder plus, and plus, generally speaking, not so very much. He is the Senator reduced to the lowest terms.

Calder is timid, more timid than Frelinghuysen with his eternal buttonholing you to ask what impression he has made, more timid than anyone except Kellogg of Minnesota. The latter is in a constant state of flutter. Little and wisplike physically he seems to blow about with every breeze of politics. He is so unsure that his nerves are always on edge, in danger of breaking. When he was balancing political consequences over nicely during the League of Nations discussion, Ex-President Taft said to him impatiently: "The trouble with you, Frank, is that you have no guts." Kellogg straightened up all his inches—physically he is a white-haired and bent Will H. Hays—and replied, "I allow no man to say that to me." He fluttered out, and Mr. Taft being kind-hearted followed him to apologize.

If you could analyze the uneasiness of Mr. Kellogg you would understand the fear which haunts the minds of all Senators. Mr. Kellogg comes to Washington after an enormously successful career at the bar. He is rich. He is respected. His place in society is secure. What would the

loss of the senatorship mean to such a man? He ought to have all the confidence which is supposed to be in the man who rises in the world, all that which comes from an established position. Unlike most great lawyers who retire into the Senate, Mr. Kellogg does not merely interest himself in constitutional questions, like a child with molasses on its fingers playing with feathers. He is industrious. He interests himself in the Senate's business. He develops nice scruples which can not be brushed aside. He wears himself out over them. He hesitates. He trembles. The certainty with which his mind must have operated in the field of legal principles deserts him in the field of political expediency. Or perhaps it is that he sees both principles and expediency and can not choose between the two.

Wadsworth of New York is an exception to the general run of Senators. He belongs by birth to the class which is traditionally free from hypocrisy. He is not boisterously contemptuous of the slavishness of Senators as Penrose was. He is quietly contemptuous. His voice has a note of well-bred impatience in it. He has not Penrose's pleasure in mere shocking, but he has the aristocratic hatred of moral ostentation. The kind of thing that is not done is the kind of thing that is not done. You don't do it and make no parade of your abstinence. Wadsworth does not open his home to all his New York colleagues in both houses just because it is



SENATOR JAMES W. WADSWORTH OF NEW YORK

politically expedient. His house is his own, and so is his conscience, which is not surrendered at the demands of woman suffrage or of the dries. He has courage. He has convictions. He is lonely. To be otherwise than lonely in the Senate you must be a Frelinghuysen, an Elkins, a Newberry, a New, a Watson, or a Hale. He will never be a leader. He has no more place in the Senate as it is than Lord Robert Cecil, a much larger man, has in the House of Commons as it is. Both belong to another day and generation. Neither is sure of anything but himself and each counts the world well lost. Both represent the aristocratic tradition.

Industry makes Reed Smoot one of the most useful of the Senators. He has a passion for details. He reads all the bills. He makes himself a master of the Government's appropriations and expenditures. He exudes figures from every pore. By temperament Mr. Smoot is unhappy, and he finds cause of dark foreboding in the mounting costs of government. His voice has a scolding note. His manner and appearance is that of a village elder. His heart is sore as he regards the political world about him, its wastefulness, its consumption of white paper, on leaves to print and on reports which no one reads. He is the aggrieved parent. "My children," he seems always to say, "you must mend your ways." He specializes in misplaced commas. Nothing is too trivial for his all seeing

eyes. In committee he talks much, twice as much as anyone else, about points which escape the attention of all his colleagues. Senators, wishing to get through no matter how, regard him as a pest. Only an unimaginative and uncreative mind can occupy itself as Smoot's does. He is a building inspector rather than a builder. With his fussiness, his minor prophetic voice, his holier-than-thou attitude toward waste, he can never be a leader of the Senate to which the idle apprentice, the good fellow, who dines out much in the Harding Senatorial set, the small business man seeking a place in society, give its tone and character.

One can not present a complete gallery of the Senate in the space of a single chapter. I have chosen a few characteristic figures, the leaders past, present, and to come, the small business man who seeks social preferment or the destruction of a title in Washington, such as Calder and Frelinghuysen, the politician who likes to play the game better in the Capitol than at home, like New, the aristocrat who escapes from the boredom of doing nothing into the boredom of a democratic chamber, the gradgrind legislator of whom there are few like Smoot, the half party man, half bloc man like Capper.

All of these men belong to a party and are limited by that party's weakness, its lack of principles, the caution which it has to use in avoiding the alienation of its loosely held supporters. The

SENATOR WILLIAM M. CALDER OF NEW YORK

party program is something on which all kinds of people can stand. Necessarily the party men in the Senate are tied down to a cause that is largely negative. They can not be other than feeble and ineffective figures.

The weakness of parties has led to the emergence of a few outstanding individual Senators who must be examined to see whether around them the new Senate which will come with the shift of power and responsibility to the legislative branch can be built. The most brilliant and interesting of them is Senator Borah, but it is significant that the farm bloc looking for a leader did not turn to him, but chose rather much less significant and effective men.

Yet the Idaho Senator seems the natural rallying point for any movement which will give new life and force to the Senate. He is established. He is the most potent single individual in the upper house. So far as there is any opposition to President Harding and his friends, Mr. Borah is that opposition. His is the intelligence which inspires the Democratic party when it consents to be inspired by intelligence. He believes that the revolution has come, not one of street fighting and bomb throwing but a peaceful change which has made the old parties meaningless, destroyed the old authorities and set men free for the new grouping that is to take place. Others in the Senate see this and are frightened. Borah sees it and is glad.

His bonds are loosed and he is a vastly braver, sincerer and more effective Senator than ever before.

It is absurd to use the word radical of Borah, Johnson, or LaFollette, for none of them is truly radical; but if one must do so for the lack of any better term, then Borah is the conservatives' radical. The angriest reactionary remains calm when his name is mentioned, perhaps because Borah never gets into a passion himself and never addresses himself to popular prejudice. He is not a mob orator. He is impersonal in his appeals. No one any longer suspects him of an ambition to be President. He seems, like a hermit, to have divorced himself from the earthly passions of politics and to have become pure intellect operating in the range of public affairs. He is almost a sage while still a Senator.

If we had the custom of electing our Ex-Presidents to the Senate, you can imagine one of them, beyond the average of intelligence, freed from ambition through having filled the highest office, occupying a place like that of Borah.

Borah perhaps likes it too well ever to descend into the market place and become a leader. His is an enviable lot, for he is the most nearly free man in Washington; why should he exchange the immunity he possesses for a small group of followers? Besides he believes in the power of oratory rather than in the power of organization. He said to me

at the Republican Convention of 1916, "I could stampede this crowd for Roosevelt." The crowd was thoroughly organized against Roosevelt.

Nature made him an orator, one of the greatest in the country. And he has come to be satisfied with the gift he has. The unimportance of his state, Idaho, has freed him from any illusions about himself with respect to the Presidency. The habit of carrying a comb in his vest pocket marks him as free from the social ambitions which number more victims in the Senate than the ambition for the presidency. He is almost a disembodied spirit politically, of the revolution he discerns he will be a spectator.

Hiram Johnson is a declining figure. I see no reason to modify the conclusion which was reached about him in the *Mirrors of Washington*, that he thought more of men than of principles and especially of one man, Johnson. The test of his sincerity came when the vote was reached on the unseating of Senator Newberry for spending too much money in the Michigan primaries.

Johnson's great issue a year before had been sanctity of popular nominations. Yet when he had an opportunity to speak and act against a brazen even though foolish attempt to buy a nomination, he was rushing wildly across the continent, arriving after the vote had been taken.

On reaching Washington, he called his news-

paper friends before him to explain the difficulties and delays that had made him late. When he had finished a nasal voice from the press remarked, "Senator, there will be great public sympathy with you as a victim of the railroads. But the people will only know how great their loss has been if you will tell them now how you would have voted if you had been here." Johnson adjourned the meeting hastily without a reply.

The absence from the roll call and the theatrical attempt to make it appear accidental were typical. Johnson had won the Michigan primaries in the national campaign of 1920. The delegates were in control of Newberry's political friends. They remained firm for Johnson throughout the balloting. Johnson avoided voting against their leader although his principles required that he should lead the fight for his unseating.

Johnson has always over-emphasized Johnson. At the Progressive convention in 1912 when Roosevelt was nominated for the Presidency and Johnson for the Vice-Presidency, it was proposed, since both were in attendance, to bring both on the stage and introduce them to the delegates. The natural order was Roosevelt first, since he was the nominee for President and since he was, moreover, one of the most distinguished figures in the world, and Johnson, since he had second place, second. But Johnson would go second to no man. Either he must show himself on the stage first or not at all.

Finally it was compromised by presenting them together at the same moment, holding hands upon the platform.

Johnson can never see himself in proper perspective. At the Progressive convention he was more important than Roosevelt. In the Newberry case his political fortunes were more important than honest primaries.

Senator Reed of Missouri is possessed of a devil. He is a satirist turned politician. He has the *saeva indignatio* of Swift. American life with its stupidity, its facile optimism, its gullibility, its easy compromises, its hypocrisy, fills him with rage. His face is shot red with passion. His voice is angry. He is a defeated idealist left in this barren generation without an ideal. He might have been led away by the war as so many were, as Wilson was, into the belief that out of its sufferings would come a purified and elevated humanity. But Reed is hard to lead away. Where other men see beauty and hope he searches furiously for sham. Where other men say cheerfully half a loaf is better than no bread he puts the half loaf on the scales and proves that it is short weight.

An old prosecuting attorney, he believes that guilt is everywhere. He is always out for a conviction. If the evidence is insufficient he uses all the arts, disingenuous presentations, appeals to prejudice, not because he is indifferent to justice but because the accused ought to be hanged anyway,

and he is not going to let lack of evidence stand in the way of that salutary consummation.

He conducts a lifelong and passionate fight against the American practice of "getting away with it." Shall Hoover get away with it as a great and pure man, the benefactor of the race! Not while Jim Reed has breath in his body! Here is an American idol, tear it down, exhibit its clay feet! Shall Wilson "get away with it," with his League of Nations and his sublimated world set free from all the baser passions of the past? Not while any acid remains on Jim Reed's tongue!

Reed is sincere. He hates sham. He nevertheless himself uses sham to fight sham. He is the nearest thing to a great satirist this country has developed. And the amazing consideration is that in a nation which dislikes satire a satirist should be elected by the suffrage of his fellows.

Probably it is only in politics that we tolerate satire. In self-government we only half believe. We are divided in our own minds. We make laws furiously and laugh at the laws we make. We pretend that the little men of politics are great and then privately we indicate our real perception of the truth by telling how small they are. Politics is suspect and it stamps you as a person of penetration to show that you are aware what sham and dishonesty there is in them. It is almost as good an evidence of a superior mind as to say, "Of course I don't believe what I read in the news-

papers." Now satire is enjoyed by superior minds, and it is only with regard to politics that we as a people have superior minds, politics not being like business the pursuit of honest everyday folk.

Jim Reed is then that part of ourselves which tells us that self-government is a good deal of a sham, in the hands of amusing charlatans. We tolerate him in perhaps the only place where we would tolerate a satirist, in the Senate. And in the Senate they fear him.

He was attacking the Four Power Pact. "People say," he declared, "that this ends the Anglo-Japanese alliance. I do not find it in the pact. I do not find it nominated in the bond," he shouted. And the friends of the pact sat silent afraid of Reed's power as a debater, until Senator Lenroot having studied the document several minutes in the cloakroom read the plain language of the agreement to end the alliance. Reed almost "got away with it" himself. But this is not leadership. One does not follow a satirist. One makes him a privileged character at most.

Reed and Borah are privileged characters each in his own way. The privilege of being "queer" is as old as the herd itself. The harmless insane man was almost sacred in primitive society. The "fool" was the only man whose disrespect did not amount to *lése majesté*. The wisdom of the "fool" was regarded with a certain awe and admiration. But the death rate among those who sought this

franchise must have been high. It must be personality which decides who survives and achieves this license and who does not, a nice capacity for adjustment, a rare sense of what the crowd will endure. Borah and Reed have it, LaFollette has not or has not chosen to exercise it.

George Moore somewhere says that if you can convince a woman that it is all play, all Pan and nymph, between you and her, you have the perfect way of a man with a maid, when his aim is something short of matrimony. But if you are too serious about it—! LaFollette is perhaps too serious about it. If he could have said what he had to say with a laugh and so as to raise a laugh he might have been privileged like Reed, or, if he had to be serious, he should have been serious like Borah, in a detached and impersonal fashion; then perhaps he might still have been something less than the public enemy that he is. But LaFollette is serious, terribly serious, terribly in earnest. He has had convictions, clung to them, and probably suffered more for them than any man in Washington.

The Wisconsin Senator is one of the least understood men in public life. In the Senate he speaks violently, with a harsh voice and an excess of manner. He is small and some of this loudness and emphasis is no doubt that compensation for lack of stature and presence to which men unconsciously resort; some of it is an exterior which has

been cultivated to cover up an unusually shy and sensitive heart. The character in history and fiction which most intrigues him is Hamlet, that gentle soul unfit for life. He has spent years studying the shy Dane. He himself is a Hamlet who has taken up arms against a sea of troubles. The "queer" man who would gain a franchise for his "queerness" must not be sensitive. The crowd likes better to persecute than to tolerate.

Then too LaFollette entered the Senate when minorities were less tolerable than they are today. He got the stamp of impossible when Roosevelt led a movement in his direction and he refused to be a part of it. Thus he became isolated, neither Progressive nor Old Guard. You can not safely be too uncompromising, too serious. It makes no difference if you were right in rejecting both wings of the party as reactionary which they speedily proved to be. It makes no difference if you were right in opposing the war, and no one is so sure today that LaFollette was wrong in doing so as men were when it was proposed to expel him from the Senate. Justification after the fact does no good. It is not your wrongness that they hate; it's your uncompromising quality, and that remains more unbreakable than ever.

An unusual loyalty explains the unwillingness to compromise. LaFollette attaches himself deeply. A characteristic act was his leaving the Senate for months to nurse a sick son back to health. It sets

him apart from most men, who do not let sickness in the family interfere with their business and perform their full duty when they hire a trained nurse. People think of LaFollette, the public man, as an egoist but this nursing of his son showed the utmost absence of egoism. And so it is with all his intimate relations, which are unusually sweet and tender.

Whatever he is like privately, publicly he is placed, rated, catalogued; the general mind is made up. The farm bloc no more turned to him than to Borah for leadership. He will always remain isolated.

Now that party discipline has been broken down, what nonconformist Senators suffer most from is the tyranny of the teapot. Senator Kenyon referred to it when he said Newberry on trial for fitness for his seat "floated back into the Senate on an ocean of tea." An unparliamentary version of the same reference to the social influence is: "The Senate is one long procession of dinners and hootch."

If you are regular politically you are regular socially. Given the habit of voting with the crowd, of putting others at ease by a not too great display of intellect, a good cook, a pre-war cellar, and a not impossible wife, and you belong to the Senatorial middle class, the new rich insurance agents, lawyers, miners, and manufacturers who control the fate of the socially ambitious. You may not be invited to the Wadsworths', or may be seldom asked there. But you are accepted by

what Mencken might call the wealthy "booboisie," the circle Mr. Harding frequented before he was advanced to the White House.

If you don't you are of the Senatorial proletariat. You are invited out seldom or not at all. You have to organize a little set of intellectuals, not found in the Senate, for your wife's tea parties.

Senator Kenyon was a moderate nonconformist. Intellectually he was honest, but not strong, so that an outsider might have thought that his honesty and independence would be overlooked. But he was never accepted by the "booboisie." He was virtually cold shouldered out of the Senate, for it was with immense relief that he escaped from teapot ostracism to the securer social area of the Federal bench.

I repeat a bit of gossip about the Iowa Senator without vouching for it. When he was retiring, it is said, a reporter asked, "What can be done with the Senate?" "Nothing," replied the Iowan, "The only thing to do is to destroy it." If he said this he really flattered the "booboisie." Destruction is reserved for wicked things like Sodom and Gomorrah. But the Senate is not wicked. It is good, honest in the sense of not stealing, well-meaning, timid, petty, tea-drinking, human, commonplace. You can't destroy it unless you have something to put in its place, and there is nothing. Much better turn it over to the blocs and see what they will do with it.

CHAPTER XI

A PEAK OF REALITY THRUSTS UP ON THE LEVEL PLAIN OF SHAMS

As well fear blocs and minorities as fear the centrifugal force on the ground that it is seeking to pull us off the face of the earth. Minorities are the centrifugal force of politics. They maintain the balance of forces which makes political existence possible. Without them the State would become unbearable; it would destroy us or we should be compelled to destroy it.

We have just passed through a period, the war, in which minorities were suppressed, in which the general will brooked no resistance, in which the bodies of men between certain ages and the minds of men and women of all ages were brought into compulsory service of the State. The mental draft dodger went to jail just as much as the physical draft dodger.

A Chief of an Industrial Workers of the World Longshoremans' Union was sentenced for twenty years because he was an I. W. W., although under his direction his organization handled efficiently

all the munitions of war shipped from Philadelphia. He "obstructed the war" by his thoughts as an I. W. W., even though his actions as a citizen contributed to success in the war.

One may tolerate during a national emergency the oppression that results from the crushing of minorities, but in time of peace it is only in the balance of political forces that political existence may go on.

All freedom is the work of minorities and so is all change. Respect for opinion is dearly bought by them. Majority views were all once minority views. Some political theorists even go so far as to say that all governments, no matter what apparent precautions are taken to represent majorities, are really conducted by minorities. Without the effective resistance of minorities the general will may become tyrannous or without the stimulus they afford it may become inert.

The blocs and minorities that are appearing in American public life are accomplishing a measure of decentralization. The highly centralized government which we recently built up is itself passing into the control of the various economic subdivisions of society. In them rather than in it is coming to be final authority.

Take freight rates for an illustration. Originally they were localized, in the unrestricted control of the railroad managers. Then they were slightly centralized in the partial control of state and

partial control of national authorities. Then control was wholly centralized in the Inter-State Commerce Commission at Washington, the States being denied effective authority even over rates within their own borders.

There you have bureaucracy at its worst, authority in the hands of an appointive commission, thousands of miles, in many cases, from the place where it was applied, and a public feeling its impotence, which is the negation of self-government.

Then comes the first step in decentralization. No locality, no State was big enough to reach out and get back the authority over its own railroad service that it once had. But the organized farmers of the whole country were able to take into their hands the power over the railroads as it affected them. Nominally the Inter-State Commerce Commission still makes rates. Practically the farmers, having the balance of power in the House and Senate, say what rates they want on agricultural products and get them. That is decentralization.

The division into States which the jealous colonists preserved in forming the Union has largely lost its significance. Men divide now according to their interests, not according to boundaries that may be learned in the school geographies. As the States weakened many of their powers gradually tended to be centralized in the national government. As the newer economic subdivisions of society become organized and self-assertive some

of the power thus centralized in Washington devolves upon them, not legally or formally, but actually and in practice. They constitute minorities too large to be denied.

It is only through decentralization that popular institutions can be kept alive, only through it that government remains near enough to the people to hold their interest and only through it that freedom from an oppressive State is preserved.

Why should minorities be regarded with such aversion? Why should President Harding declaim against them so persistently? Our Federal Constitution is written full of safeguards for minorities. The reservoir of power is in the minorities, the States, the local subdivisions which feared the loss of their identity and independence through the central government they were creating.

Only powers expressly yielded by the local units may be assumed by the Republic. The States were the minorities; they felt when they joined the Union that their rights as minorities had to be jealously guarded, in order that they might have the realities of self-government.

You have in the rule that the small State must have as many Senators as the large State a sharp assertion of the right of geographical minorities. If the larger States had not accepted this principle the smaller States would never have joined the Union.

Gradually these geographical minorities lost

their importance in the public consciousness. Our people had come and kept coming to this country from the ends of the earth. Arriving here they continued to be nomads, sweeping over the West in search of new pasture lands or more fertile soil, moving from the farm to the city and thrusting their roots in nowhere. No difference of language or customs set up arbitrary frontiers.

Moreover we were the first people to settle a land where modern methods of locomotion destroyed the use and wont of limited localities. Instead of being citizens of New York united with the citizens of New Jersey, Connecticut, and the rest of them for the common defense, as our forefathers imagined, we became citizens of the United States, which was divided into New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and the rest for purposes of policing, road-making, and other functions that could be better managed at home than from Washington.

A State began to assume about the same place in the Union that a county does in a State.

The basic reality for our forefathers was the State, the Union existing for the convenience of the States. The basic reality for us is the Union, the States existing for the convenience of the Union, which is too vast to administer everything from a central point.

As the geographical subdivisions lost their significance economic subdivisions rose to take their

place. The farmer of Kansas began to have more in common with the farmer of Iowa than he had with the coal miner of his own State. The nation-wide organization of farmers resulted, and it is a more real unit in the political consciousness than is that unit on which the Fathers laid such stress, the State. It is a minority that has no reserve rights under the Constitution but which achieves its rights by force of numbers and organization.

These economic subdivisions are the reality today. The United States is a union of the State of Agriculture, the State of Labor, the State of Manufacturing, and a dozen other occupational States of greater or less importance. And after all why should not Agriculture, Manufacturing, Labor, Foreign, and Domestic Commerce form a union for the national defense, carefully reserving essential powers to themselves as States, just as the thirteen original colonies did? Why should we let this new political organism keep us awake nights?

Nationally we have a complex on the subject of disunion. Fortunate perhaps is the country which is subject to the pressure of a foreign enemy on its border, as France is, for example, to that of Germany. If you have a convenient foe to be afraid of you do not have to be afraid of yourselves. It seems to be the rule that nations like individuals must have fears and the American phobia is that this country will proceed amœba-wise by scission, into several countries. When we feel a

weakening at the center we feel a horror in the peripheries.

We fought one great war to prevent a breaking up of the Union and whenever we hear the word "section," we become apprehensive. And just as "section" fills our minds with fear of cleavage upon geographical lines, so "class" arouses anxiety over cleavage upon social lines. "Class" calls up the spectre of socialism. "Bloc" moreover is a word of unhappy associations. It brings into the imagination Europe with all its turmoil and its final catastrophe.

The Civil War left us with one complex. The European War left us with another. The agricultural bloc touches both, suggesting division and upon European lines. Being agricultural it is vaguely sectional; being the projection of a single interest into national politics so as to cut across parties, it follows European precedents. It moreover derives its name from abroad.

Call it log-rolling by the farmers, however, and it relates to the habitual method of American legislation. It conforms to our best traditions. We never spoke of the groups which filled pork barrels of the past as blocs, but every river and harbor bill was the work of minorities uniting to raid the treasury. The two recent amendments to the Constitution, granting the suffrage to women and prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, were also achieved minorities.

The organized minorities of the past dissolved when their end was obtained. They had a specific rather than a general purpose. Usually it was a moral purpose, the prohibition of alcoholic drinks, or political justice for woman. Never until recently did a minority raise the economic interests of one section of society against those of the rest of society and promise to keep on raising them. The farm bloc is the first permanent economic minority to organize itself effectively for political action.

The phenomenon is not that the bloc impairs our political system; it does not; majority rule is always tempered by minority rule or it becomes either a tyranny or a dead thing. It is that it threatens our pocketbooks. It obtains low railroad rates on farm products. It shifts taxes from farmers to the rest of us. It secures for farmers special aid in the form of government credits.

Nevertheless its appearance is the most hopeful sign in Washington that we may emerge from the governmental bog into which we have sunk. We had centralized to the point of creating an immense and dull bureaucracy headed by a weak Executive and equally weak Congress. Interest in self-government was being destroyed by the mere remoteness and irresponsiveness of the mechanism. "The parties are exactly alike. What difference does it make which is in power?"

We had created an organization too vast for any one to take it in hand. And the only remedy in

that case is to break the organization down. Decentralization into States was impossible, for men never go back to outworn forms, and State boundaries had ceased to be the real lines of division in American society. A way out of this difficulty has been found through the seizing of power by occupational organizations, of which the farm bloc is the most famous and most successful.

We could not go on as we are, with an enfeebled Executive and an enfeebled Congress. And, if I have analyzed the situation correctly, we shall have no more strong Executives, until some national emergency unites the people temporarily for the accomplishment of some single purpose. The Executive is the greatest common divisor of a diverse society. Congress, equally, is weak so long as it remains a Congress based upon the present theory of party government, for the party has to be stretched out too thin, has to represent too many different views to have character and purpose. Steadily parties are being driven more and more to pure negation. Wilson was elected the first time on the negative issue, "No more Roosevelt and his radicalism," and the second time on the negative issue, "He kept us out of war," and Harding upon the negative issue, "No more Wilson."

If the two existing parties cannot be positive and constructive, "Why not scrap them both?" asks Mr. Samuel G. Blythe. Why not, indeed?

except for the fact that you can find no principle upon which to found a third party. If there were a positive principle upon which a majority of the voters would agree the existing parties would grab for it. They are colorless and negative not by choice but by necessity.

Let us look at the situation. The public is disgusted with the existing parties and becoming indifferent to the possibilities of the suffrage and of popular government, an unhealthy sign. A new party is out of the question, for to succeed any new party must be broad enough to cover all sorts and conditions of men, divergent groups and interests. It must at once have the defects of the old parties.

So long as parties "must be careful," to quote Mr. Harding, executives must "be careful" and Congress organized on the party basis "must be careful." We gravitate toward negation.

We face in government perhaps what it is said we face in industry and in war, organization on such a scale that men are no longer masters of it. Under such circumstances there is nothing to do but to break it up into its component parts. That is what the group or bloc system is, a resolution into component parts.

It is precisely what will happen in the industrial field if the great combinations of twenty years ago prove too unwieldy. The vertical trust, the single industry, organized like the Stinnes group or like the Henry Ford industry from the raw material

to the finished product but seeking no monopoly, promises to take the place of the horizontal trust of monopolistic tendency. The bloc is a vertical organization appearing in the field of politics, which hitherto has been dominated by the horizontal organization of the parties.

A vertical organization, like everything vertical in this world, tends to rest upon the solid earth. It has its base in reality. The bloc introduces reality into public life. It will be represented by men who are not ashamed to stand frankly for the selfish interests of their group.

When we banished selfish interests from the government a few years ago we banished all interests—and even all interest, too—leaving very little but hypocrisy and timidity. The representatives of a group will not have to be all things to all men as our party men are, but only one thing to one kind of men.

If we cannot get our present parties to stand for anything, if for the same reason we cannot form a new party to stand for anything, we can at least introduce principles into politics through the force of group support. Blocs will be positive, not merely negative as the parties have become. They do not have to please everybody. They can and must be constructive.

The clash of ideas which we miss between parties may take place between blocs. I am assuming, as everyone in Washington does, that the farm bloc

is only a forerunner of other similar political efforts, for every economic interest which is organized among the voters may extend itself vertically into Congress.

There will be a gain in decentralization, there will be a gain in honesty, there will be a gain in constructive political effort through the direct representation of the real interests of society in Congress.

Nor does there appear any danger of the break up into utterly unrelated minorities such as has taken place, let us say, in France and Germany. We have what most European countries has not, an elected Executive who plays an important part in legislation, the President with his veto power. So long as the presidential office retains this function, and it is always likely to retain it, there must be national parties within which the minorities, interests, or occupational groups, must coöperate.

Groups will not be able in this country as in Europe to elect members of the national legislature independently, then form a combination and pick their own Executive. They are under compulsion to elect the Executive at large by the votes of the whole people; they must hold together enough for that purpose.

The centrifugal tendency of minorities in the American system is thus effectively restrained. Groups must work within the parties, as the agricultural bloc has done and as the proposed liberal workers bloc promises to do. A handful of seats

in Congress alone is not worth fighting for: that is why all third party movements have failed. A handful of seats in a European parliament is worth having; it may dictate the choice of the Executive; that is why parties are numerous abroad. In other words "bloc" is a useful name as indicating a radical departure in our political system but it contains no threat for this country of the political disintegration prevailing in Europe.

The names Republican and Democrat are likely to last as convenient designations of the accord reached for national purposes between the vertical organizations which represent economic or other group interests of the people. Unity is thus preserved as well as diversity, which is what upon geographical lines, the Father of the Constitution sought.

You have only to regard the agricultural bloc to perceive the truth of this analysis. Primarily its members are Republicans or Democrats and only secondarily representatives of agriculture. They have rejected leadership of a separatist tendency, choosing the moderate guidance of Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Capper rather than the more individualistic generalship of Mr. Borah or Mr. La Follette. Some day their successors may be primarily representatives of agriculture and only secondarily Republicans or Democrats, but in one of the two big parties they must retain their standing, or share the fate of third parties, a fate made

SENATOR ARTHUR I. CAPPER OF KANSAS

inevitable by the necessity electing of a chief executive at large.

When the farmer votes for legislators who will represent primarily the farm interest, and the laborer for legislators who will represent primarily the labor interest and the business man for legislators who will represent the business interests self-government will assume a new importance, even though all of these interests will have to be subordinated to the general interest for the sake of coöperation with a party in the choice of an Executive.

I have compared the group organization to the vertical trust of the industrial world. The resemblance is striking. Take the instance of Herr Stinness, the most interesting figure in manufacturing today. Originally he was a coal mine owner. Instead of spreading laterally to monopolize coal he builds upward from his raw material to finished products. He adds iron to his holdings and manufactures electrical supplies and electricity. He owns his own ships for the carrying of his products. He would buy railroads from the German government for the transporting of them. He owns newspapers for political action. And the whole organization culminates with himself in the Reichstag, and in international relations where he is almost as significant a figure as the German government itself.

Mr. Henry Ford, a lesser person, started at the

other end and organized downward to the raw material. He now owns his own mines, his railroads for shipping, his raw material and products, his steel foundries, the factories which turn out his finished products, his weekly newspaper, and he is himself a political figure of no one yet knows how much importance.

The farmers are organized for social purposes, for the distribution of information among themselves, for coöperation in buying and selling, for maintaining a lobby at Washington and finally for political action. Political action crowns an organization which serves all the purposes for which union is required.

Practically every other interest is organized to the point of maintaining a lobby at Washington. Only the farmers have developed organization in Congress. Only they have adapted their organization to all their needs, social and political. Only they have the perfect vertical trust running straight up from the weekly entertainment in the union or bureau to the Senate in Washington, where their Senators do the bidding of their agent, Mr. Gray Silver.

Indispensable to effective special interest representation seems to be an organization for other than political purposes which brings the voters of a class or occupation together. Labor has such an organization in its unions. Business has it perhaps in its Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade.

Either of them has the means at its disposal for imitating the farmers and developing a bloc in the national legislature.

It is natural that the farm interest should be the first to push its way beyond the lobby or propaganda stage at Washington to that of organized representation on the floor of Congress. Agriculture is the single interest or the immensely predominating interest in many States. A Senator or Representative from such a state may safely consider himself a representative of agriculture. But in a more fully developed community there is a diversity of interests. Where there is capital there is also labor. Moreover most of the industrial States have also their agricultural interest. It is not safe for an Eastern Senator or Representative, as the situation now stands, to identify himself with any minority. He must at least pretend to "represent the whole people."

If the vertical movement in politics proceeds, as it almost inevitably must, it will manifest itself effectively first in the lower house. Congress districts are small units. In an industrial State one district may be prevailingly agricultural, another prevailingly labor, another prevailingly commercial. Groups operating within a party will tend to parcel out the districts among themselves holding their support of each other's candidates, as the Liberal and Labor parties have often done in England.

The Senate will be less responsive. States are

large units and, except in farming regions, are not prevailingly of one interest. But a division may be effected like that which now gives one Senator to the eastern and another to the western, or one to the urban and another to the rural part of the State. One Senator may go to business and another to agriculture or to labor as the case may be.

What I have just written is by way of illustration. I have spoken of agricultural, labor and business blocs not because these are the only divisions of society that may be organized for political purpose but because they already have the basic machinery and seem certain to thrust upwards till they are prominently represented in Congress. Other minority interests are already showing themselves, as for example the soldiers of the late war and the inland waterways group. These and others like them, some permanent and some temporary, will cut across the main subdivisions, so that men who are divided on one interest will be united on another and thus furnish a further cement in the body politic in addition to the necessity of joint action upon the presidency.

Thus there is less danger of our being ruled by minorities than there is of minorities having to surrender too much of their purposes for the sake of unity among themselves and of our thus being in spite of their organization little better off than we are now, reduced by the sheer mass that has to be moved to a policy of inaction and negation.

In an earlier chapter I analyzed the Senate to show how weak and will-less it is and how inferior is its personnel, how prostrate it lies before any powerful minority which has a purpose and the will to carry it out. I used the Senate as typical of Congress; a desire to save space and to avoid repetitions kept me from a similar study of the House. In the same way the parties lie ready for the uses of minorities. They are will-less. They have no aim and express no unity because when the old pioneer will to exploit as quickly as possible the national resources without regard to waste, physical or social, ceased to operate, there was no unity, except, as I have explained, for temporary purposes, for social defense under Roosevelt and for national defense under Wilson, two essentially negative ends.

Mr. Will H. Hays trying to tell the Republican senate how to vote on the League covenant, was a less powerful figure than was Mr. Wayne B. Wheeler ordering it to vote that more than one half of one per cent of alcohol in a beverage was intoxicating, or Mr. Gray Silver forcing it to extend credits to farmers, or Colonel Taylor frightening it into voting for a soldiers' bonus.

The old party bosses are dead. No machine leader will control as many delegates in the next national convention as will Mr. Gray Silver. So far as delegates are now led they are led by Senators and Representatives. A Senate group chose

Mr. Harding at Chicago. And Senators and Representatives lie at the mercy of organized minorities.

The Republican party in 1920 was an agglomeration of minorities, held together by no better binder than the negation of Wilsonism. There were the German vote, the Irish vote and the other foreign votes; the farmer vote, the business vote, the old American vote, the frightened vote, the herd vote and every conceivable kind of vote. It was in effect a bloc, in the European sense of that word, a combination of small parties. These minorities were mostly unorganized in 1920 or imperfectly organized; their development vertically is now going on. Some of them will appear as definitely upon the floor of the 1924 convention as the agricultural group has upon the floor of Congress.

With the organization of minorities Congress becomes important, for it is in Congress that the Fathers in their wisdom provided for the expression of minorities. The Presidency, according to the argument used before in this book, dwindles to a charming embodiment of that great American negative—nation-wide public opinion. The only ordinarily available positive—group opinion—finds its play in the Legislature. There will be determined upon whose shoulders the taxes will be shifted, who shall have effective rebates in freight rates, and more important still, who shall use for his group interests the government control of credit.

GREY SILVER, THE MAN BEHIND THE FARM BLOC

Where these questions are being decided there public attention will concentrate. There will be the stress upon government.

As Congress becomes more important better men will be drawn into it. There will be a gain to public life in this country from emphasis upon the parliamentary side of government. As it is now only one prize in American politics is worth while and that is the Presidency. And there is no known rule by which men may attain to it. Candidates for it are chosen at random, from governing a State, from an obscure position in the Senate, from the army, it may be; in no case does it come as the certain reward of national service.

And if, as happened when Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Wilson were made President, really able men attain the office, they may serve their country only four years, or eight years at most, and then must retire from view. In England, for example, similar men are at the head of the government or leading the opposition for the greater part of a lifetime. English public life would inevitably look richer than ours even were it not richer, for when they breed a statesman in England they use him for years. We discard him after four or eight years. We have not the system for developing statesmen and when by chance we find one we waste him.

We put our faith in the jack-of-all-trades and the amateur. We have the cheerful notion that the "crisis produces the man." This is nothing more

than the justice illusion which is lodged in the minds of men, an idea, religious in its origin, that no time of trial would arrive unless the man to meet it were benignantly sent along with it, a denial of human responsibility, an encouragement to the happy-go-lucky notion that everything always comes out right in the end.

The world, in going through the greatest crisis in history has controverted this cheerful belief, for it has not produced "the man" either here or elsewhere. No one appeared big enough to prevent the war. No one appeared big enough to shorten the war. No one appeared big enough to effect a real peace. And no one appeared big enough to guide this country wisely either in the war or in the making of peace, which is still going on.

Only in parliamentary life is there enough permanency and enough opportunity for the breeding of statesmen. We shall never have them while the Presidency with its hazards and its wastes is stressed as it has been in recent years.

And Congress itself must be reformed before it will encourage and develop ability. The seniority rule, to which reference has been made before, must be abolished before talent will have its opportunity in the legislative branch.

One of the first things that aggressive minorities would be likely to do is to reach out for the important committee chairmanships. Already the seniority rule has been broken in the House, when

Martin Madden was made Chairman of the Appropriations Committee instead of the senior Republican, an inadequate person from Minnesota.

And in any case the seniority rule will be severely tested in the Senate. If Senator McCumber is defeated in North Dakota and Senator Lodge is defeated or dies, Senator Borah will be in line to be chairman of the important Foreign Relations Committee. When Senator Cummins, who is sick, dies or retires and Senator Townsend is defeated, which now seems likely, Senator LaFollette will be in line to be chairman of the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce. Both irregulars will then attain places of vast power unless the seniority rule is abrogated.

Thus even the machine in the Senate will soon be under pressure to do away with the absurd method of awarding mere length of service with power and place.

Minorities when they determine to take the Senate and the House out of the enfeebled grasp of incompetent regularity will inevitably find precedents already established for them.

A richer public life will come from the breakdown of the safeguards of mediocrity and from the stressing of the legislative at the expense of the executive branch of the government. Both these results are likely to follow from the effective appearance of minority interests in Congress.

CHAPTER XII

THE HAPPY ENDING

I HAVE hesitated a long time over writing this last chapter, because of the natural desire to give to my book a happy ending.

One may write critically of America and things American, but only if one ends in a mood of hopeful confidence. There is so much youth, so much latent power here, that one cannot fail to have faith that the spirit of man will gain some enlargement from the experiment in living which we are carrying on in this country.

And even if that were not true, egotism requires us to believe that we are ever going forward to better things; for how should "the forces" have the effrontery to establish so splendid a people as ourselves upon so rich a continent, while reserving for us nothing but a commonplace career, that of one of the many peoples who have from time to time occupied the fairer regions of the earth?

At least we shall fill a place in history alongside Greece and Rome; we feel it as the imaginative

young man feels in himself the stirrings of a future Shakespeare, Napoleon, or Lincoln.

The human mind refuses to conceive of so much power coming to ordinary ends. The justice illusion which men have found so indispensable a companion on their way through time requires the happy ending. As it is only right and fair that when the forces send us a crisis they should send us a man equal to it, so it is only right and fair that when they put so great a people as ourselves in the world they should prepare for it a splendid destiny.

I subscribe heartily to this doctrine. It is as convincing as any I have ever seen based on the theory which we all cheerfully accept, that man is not master of his own fate, that he does not need to be, that he had better not be, that he reaps where he does not sow, reaps, indeed, abundant crops.

In the preceding chapter, working toward the happy ending, I have brought my characters to the verge of felicity: the perfect union between minorities and majorities, which is the aim of all social order, is in sight.

I have based my minorities upon self-interest, thus introducing into our government the selfish interests banished therefrom twenty years ago. Their banishment was an achievement of virtue. Their reintroduction is the accomplishment of good sense. They are the great reality while the world thinks as it does.

Since someone somewhere, in a treatise on

economics probably, penned the phrase "enlightened self-interest," we have all more or less become enamored of the idea that wisdom—enlightenment—reposes in the bosom of selfishness. Justice requires that wisdom should be somewhere. The reasoning runs like this. The world cannot get on without wisdom. Justice demands that the world should get on. Therefore there is wisdom in the world. We know it is not in ourselves or in our neighbors. We feel, therefore, that it must be in the bosom of perfect selfishness. And as we cast our eyes about us we think we know where the bosom of perfect selfishness is, and we feel assured.

Sometimes, of course, we place it in the heads of all mankind, it being a thing that no one man has and no few men have, but which is one of those mysterious properties of the aggregate which does not inhere in the individuals composing the aggregate; a sort of colloidal element that comes from shaking men up together, though all are without it before the mixing and shaking.

Some would place it, as Mr. Wilson seems to in a famous passage on minorities, in the breasts of the enlightened few. When the few disagreed with him, he threw them and their wisdom in jail.

But wherever it is, it is sure to be found in a system which preserved the old parties representing the general mind of the country along with the new vertical political organizations, representing the minorities, thrusting up like volcanoes upon the

placid plane of politics that Mr. Harding once delighted to survey.

You have in this combination the spontaneous wisdom of the masses, if that is where wisdom generates. You have the wisdom of the few, if you believe in impregnation from above, and you have the wisdom of selfishness, if you believe as most of us do in the enlightenment of self-interest. And no one ever located wisdom anywhere else than in these three places, for the first, as I might easily demonstrate, is the modern democratic name for the wisdom of God; the second is the wisdom of men; and the third is the wisdom of the serpent; beside which there are no other wisdoms.

This you will admit is moving rapidly and without reserve toward the happy ending. But I think every writer of a novel has stuck his tongue in his cheek as he wrote those benedictory words, "And they lived happy ever after." And I stick my tongue in my cheek as I think of Mr. Gray Silver, the effective director of the farmers' vertical political trust sitting in the Senate, leading it perhaps in place of Senator Lodge of Massachusetts.

To Mr. Lodge's petulant, imperious gesture—the sharp handclap for the pages—would succeed Mr. Silver's fixing gesture, that of a country merchant smoothing out a piece of silk before a customer at a counter. Mr. Silver as he talks performs one constant motion, a gentle slow moving of both hands horizontally, palms down.

Mr. Silver is a lobbyist with the powers of a dictator, or a dictator with the habits of a lobbyist, whichever way you wish to look at it. A former farmer, member of the West Virginia legislature, representative of farm organizations at Washington, he rules the Senate with more power than Mr. Lodge has or Mr. Harding has, but always with the gentle touch of a general-storekeeper, spreading the wrinkles out of a yard of satin.

But even this little lobbyist has a certain definiteness which public men generally lack. His feet are firmly placed upon reality. He speaks for a solid body of opinion. He is a positive rather than a negative force. He represents a fairly united minority which knows what it wants, and men are strong or weak according as they are or are not spokesmen of a cause; and the selfish interest of a group easily takes on the pious aspect of a cause.

It is always better to deal with principals than with agents. Gray Silver, Colonel John H. Taylor, the Apollo of the soldiers' bonus lobby, perfect ladies' man in appearance, who is full of zeal also for a cause, that of those who did not make money out of the war and who should in common justice make it all the rest of their lives out of the peace, and Wayne B. Wheeler, the fanatic leader of the drys, are all more real men than those who do their bidding in the Senate and the House.

No, if I put my tongue in my cheek as I write the words "lived happy ever after," it is because

I see only a measure of improvement in the freeing of men from existing political conventions which will come from the effective emergence of minorities. A richer public life will result from increased vitality of the legislative branch. But a rich public life, no; for that requires men. You cannot fashion it out of Lodges, Watsons, Curtises, Gillettes, Mondells, Hardings, Hugheses, and Hoovers, or even Gray Silvers, Taylors, or Wheelers.

And we do not breed men in this country. If the test of a civilization is an unusually high average of national comfort, achieved in a land of unparalleled resources, whose exploitation was cut off from interruption by foreign enemies, then this experiment in living which we have been conducting in America has been a great success; if it is a further freeing of the human spirit, such as finds its expression in the rare individuals who make up the bright spots in all past human history, then its success is still to be achieved.

Many blame the dullness and general averageness which afflicts us upon democracy. There is democracy and there is timidity and stupidity; there is the appeal to low intelligence; the compulsion to be a best seller rests upon us all. *Post hoc propter hoc.*

I am going to blame it upon the mistake Euclid made in his theorem about two parallel lines. This was an error of Euclid's, modern mathematics proves, unless you assume space to be infinite.

Having committed ourselves to Euclid, we committed ourselves to a space that was infinite. Space being regarded as infinite, man was little, relatively.

Euclid having made his mistake about the parallels, it followed inevitably that Mr. Harding should be little.

I use Mr. Harding only by way of illustration. You may fill any other name you like of the Washington gallery into that statement of inevitability and do it no violence. And this very interchangeability of names suggests that you must go further back than democracy to find the cause of today's sterility.

Besides, we have had infinite space, in our minds; but have we ever had democracy there? De Gourmont writes that no religion ever dies, but it rather lives on in its successor. Similarly, no form of government ever dies; it survives in its successor. A nation does not become a democracy by writing on a bit of paper, "resolved that we are a democracy, with a government consisting of executive, legislative, and judicial branches chosen by majority vote."

Government, however organized, is what exists in the minds of the people, and in that mind is stored up a dozen superstitions, handed down from primitive days, gathering force from time to time as new names are given to them and new "scientific" bases are found for them.

We laugh at the divine right of kings, but we could not accept self-government without bestowing on it an element of divinity. We have the divine right of Public Opinion. We can hardly print these words without the reverence of capital letters. The founders of modern democracy knew there could be no government without a miraculous quality. Formerly one mere man by virtue of ruling became something divine. The miracle grew difficult to swallow. You could regard this one man and see that he was a fool and had too many mistresses. He was the least divine-looking thing that could be imagined. Very well then, put the divine quality into something remote. All men by virtue of ruling themselves became divine.

An immense inertia develops between theoretical self-government and the practical reluctance of humanity to be governed by anything short of the heavenly hosts. I don't know whether this reluctance springs from racial modesty, the feeling that man is not good enough to govern himself, or from racial egotism, the belief that nothing is too good to govern him; but it is a great reality. The little men at Washington are will-less in the conflict.

To overcome this inertia, minorities whose interests cannot wait upon the slow benevolent processes of determinism or upon the divine rightness of public opinion, form to prod the constitutional organs of government into action. Mr. Gray Silver, the silk smoother, and Mr. Wayne B.

Wheeler, the Puritan fanatic, are both just as much parts of the government as is Mr. Harding. So, too, is every one of the hundred and more lobbies which issue publicity at Washington. We recognize this plurality of our institutions in our common speech. We refer habitually to the "invisible government," to "government by business," to "party government," to "government by public opinion." We have little but inertia, except as outside pressure is applied to it.

The little men at Washington live in all this confusion of an excessively plural government. They are pushed hither and yon by all these forces, organized and unorganized, mental and physical, real and imaginary, that inhibit and impel self-government. They lean heavily upon parties only to find parties bending beneath their weight. They yield to blocs and lobbies. They watch publicity and put out their own publicity to counteract it.

Like the ministers of crowned fools, they gull the present embodiment of divine right and cringe before it. They are everything but the effective realization of a democratic will.

All this sounds as if I were getting far from my happy ending, and you begin to see me asking the old question, "Is democracy a failure?" But no, it is too soon to ask it. Wait a thousand years until democracy has had a real chance. A revolution—no really optimistic prognosis can be written which does not have the world revolution in it—a

revolution will have to take place in men's minds before this is a democracy.

I would absolve myself from the taboo of this word. Property is a grand form of clothes. A property revolution, such as the Socialists recommend, would be little more important in setting men's minds free for self-government, than would putting women in trousers be in setting women's minds free for the achievement of sex equality.

Some German—I think it was Spengler—writing about some "Niedergang," I think it was of western civilization—all Germans like to write about Niedergangs—demonstrated that every new civilization starts with a new theory of the universe, of space and time. That is, it starts with a real revolution.

Well, then, here is the true happy ending; Einstein is giving us a new theory of the universe, knocking the mathematical props from under infinity, teaching us that man largely fashions the world out of his own mind.

Man again tends to become what the old Greek radical called him, "The measure of all things." Once he is, and it will take a long time for him to admit that he is, there may be a real chance for democracy and for the emergence of great individuals, who are after all the best evidence of civilization.

You see the happy ending is Einstein and not the farm bloc.

Meanwhile we have the farm bloc, one sign of vitality amid much deadness, a reassertion of the principle which the Fathers of the Constitution held, that there must be room for the play of minorities in our political system.

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